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UNITARIAN VIEWS VINDICATED.

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Unitarian Views Vindicated.

A REPLY TO

REV. HENRY M. DENISON'S REVIEW

OF

"UNITARIAN VIEWS."

BY JOHN H. HEYWOOD,

Minister of the Unitarian Church, Louisville, Kentucky.

LOUISVILLE:

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REPLY.

At the session of the "Conference of Western Unitarian Churches," held in the city of Louisville, Ky., May, 1854, a report was presented by a Committee appointed at the previous session, held in the city of St. Louis, Mo., to whom the following Preamble and Resolutions had been referred.

"As there is misunderstanding of the views of Unitarian Christians on important subjects, it is deemed proper to make some declaration in reference thereto;

"*Resolved*, That we regard Jesus Christ not as a mere inspired man, but as the Son of God; the messenger of the Father to men, miraculously sent; the mediator between God and man; the Redeemer of the world: That we regard the miracles of the New Testament as facts on which the gospel is based."

The Report was listened to with profound attention, and, after full discussion, was ordered to be published with the accompanying resolutions.

"*Resolved*, That we have heard with much profit the Report of Judge PIRTLE, and that it be referred to the Executive Committee to be printed.

"*Resolved however*; That, under our organization as the Conference of Western Unitarian Churches, we have no right to adopt any statement of belief as authoritative, or as a declaration of Unitarian Faith, other than the New Testament itself, which is the divinely-authorized rule both of faith and practice.

"*Resolved*, That we earnestly recommend to the churches and societies here represented by us, to adhere more and more closely to the direct instructions of our Lord Jesus Christ, that we may become living branches of the true vine and bring forth the Christian fruit of good works, to the glory of God."

The Report, accordingly, was printed and sent into the world — an unassuming little volume entitled "Unitarian Views."

This volume has been reviewed by Rev. HENRY M. DENISON, rector of St. Paul's Church, Louisville, Ky.

As Unitarian Christians we rejoice that the volume has been reviewed — that the Reviewer has taken pains to call public attention to it, and has done the best in his power to awaken an interest in the important subject discussed. Truth never fears discussion, and as lovers of truth we desire that our views may be subjected to the most rigid investigation. If, on examination, they can be proved defective or erroneous, be it so. We make no claim to infallibility, and we trust that we have no such pride of opinion, no such idolatry of consistency, as to make us unwilling to acknowledge our error when convinced of it. But if discussion only reveals the more clearly the harmony of these views with the truth as it is in Jesus, with his divinely-authorized standard, be it so. We certainly shall not mourn, nor will the cause of Christianity receive detriment. "To this end was I born," said our great Master, "and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth. Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice."

But while discussion is always to be welcomed, it is to be regretted that the reviewer has introduced into the controversy an element, which

ought to have had no place in it, by indulging in an insinuation implicating the mental clearness, if not the moral integrity, of the writer of the Report and his associates. Insinuations, innuendos, we are aware, are weapons not unfrequently employed in theological discussions, but the frequency of their use makes them none the less objectionable—none the less unworthy to be employed by Christians. The Christian should be by eminence the true gentleman, one whose courtesy flows from a perennial spring, Christ's principle in the heart; and, of all discussions, those pertaining to subjects of highest interest should be most characterized by justice and candor. The insinuation to which we refer is that of plagiarism, than which a more offensive charge cannot be made against an author. We can hardly believe that the reviewer means deliberately to accuse the writer of the Report of this serious violation of integrity. If this is his purpose, if he thinks that the writer is amenable to this charge, that he could be guilty of the meanness as well as the falsity of literary theft, it would have been more manly to make a direct, unequivocal accusation. But if he did not mean to bring this charge, why does he say (p. 46) "that

the originality of this whole Report is no greater than was absolutely necessary to allow for the difference of opinion which every Unitarian holds from every other Unitarian upon a subject, where the only *one* faith has been already appropriated and held by the church Catholic since the Christian Era;" and (p. 49) that "the correspondence between the statement of the Committee and that from the graceful pen of Dr. Channing, as contained in these two extracts is, to say the least, very considerable"?

That two men, writing on the same subject, should fall into similar trains of thought, and even employ similar expressions, is no uncommon occurrence. If the reviewer had merely chosen to intimate the existence of such coincidence as this, there would have been no occasion for censure or regret; but his language implies, or at least seems to imply, something more than this and different from this. The implication is, that the writer of the Report took the thoughts and language of another, and that other one of the most eminent of American authors, and attempted to palm them off upon readers as his own. Of course, to all who know the writer, such an implication would be as nothing, and, to the wri-

ter himself, they would be as the idle wind; but they are nevertheless to be regretted, because they introduce an element, which, as we have said, should have no place in theological discussions, and the tendency of which is to embitter discussion, to engender prejudice, and cause personal alienation.

It is to be regretted, moreover, that the reviewer, in proposing to quote the language of the Report, should have omitted sentences which are evidently essential to a fair representation and a full appreciation of the opinions and sentiments of the writer. On page 152 he quotes as follows: "To pause about what we have heard in the prayers of our fathers and mothers seems almost like disrespect; and it requires heroism to search if it be true. It takes strength to unfetter the reason, and strike for truth only; but this is an age of moral courage, self-reliance, and love of truth; God loves a brave man, and a man who is brave enough to come through ranks and throngs of bishops, emperors, kings, and parliaments, to inquire of Him for truth." These sentences are quoted, as if one immediately followed the other in the report. There is no mark, no sign, to indicate omission. The read-

ers of the review must necessarily have supposed that the sentences were placed in this connection by the writer of the Report and, therefore, may have received the impression that the writer is a man, capable of making light of the religious views and feelings of revered parents—of regarding and treating such views and sentiments as "childish trammels and dreams;" an impression, it is needless to say to any who have read the Report, or any who know the writer, utterly without foundation. By none is the remembrance of venerated parents more sacredly cherished, by none are the religious sentiments dear to those parents more profoundly respected, than by him.

This quotation is made for the purpose of sustaining the assertion of the reviewer, that the writer of the Report "ascribes, with much confidence, the monopoly of all true bravery to those who have succeeded in divesting themselves of such childish trammels and dreams," i. e. to Unitarians. Very strange must it seem to any who know the spirit of the writer of the Report, or of Unitarians generally, that such an "assumption of all moral heroism" should be made, for no class of Christians have ever been more ready than they to discern and acknowledge the vir-

tues and graces of fellow-Christians. But the truth is that no such assumption is made, and if all that the writer said upon the subject had been quoted, the readers of the Review could have had no difficulty in seeing that no such assumption is made. The writer, in answering the question, why doctrines which he and his brother-Unitarians regard as erroneous, "should have had the reliance of a majority of those professing the Christian faith for so long a time," refers first to the fact that the decrees—i. e. at Nice, Constantinople, and Chalcedon—"were enforced by the political as well as the spiritual authority, by the anathemas of the bishops and the edicts of a tyrant, demanding men to yield conscience and reason, or be destroyed." Next he alludes to the influence of the dark ages, and then proceeds as follows: "when the world awoke again, the habits of ancestry, the faith of parents, were on the children. Had the decrees set up other doctrines, would not these doctrines have had the same force, the same veneration, to-day, as what they did set up? Who can deny this? Nothing is so strong to bind men as the religion of their ancestors. Even superstition is entailed, and wears not out with ages. *The subject of re-*

ligious faith is an awful subject. We are afraid even to question a creed that we have been taught is nothing less than our salvation. If men have been taught, by inherited instruction, in the church and at the fireside, such a doctrine for instance, as that Christ was really God, they feel as if they were impeaching holiness and doing blasphemy to doubt it. And to pause about what we have heard in the prayers of our fathers and mothers seems almost like disrespect, and it requires heroism to search if it be true. *The sentiment is beautiful, sublime; but truth is first and above all.* Thus succeeding generations are induced to yield the implicit reliance, which belongs only to the scriptures of truth, to that which was made by usurped authority, enforced by oppression and wrong. It takes strength to unfetter the reason and to strike for truth only; but this is an age of moral courage, self-reliance, and love for truth. God loves the man that loves the truth. God loves a brave man, and a man who is brave enough to come through ranks and throngs of bishops, emperors, kings, and parliaments, to inquire of Him for truth."

This is the language of the Report, in which the writer claims not "the monopoly of all true

bravery," but simply states well-known facts and acknowledged principles. The reviewer may differ from the writer in regard to the truth of the doctrines announced in the decrees, but he will not deny that the decrees were enforced by political as well as spiritual authority, and by the anathemas of bishops. The hurling of anathemas has not yet ceased. The Athanasian creed, which the Episcopal Church in England requires its ministers and members to read and assent to, dooms all who dissent from its statements to everlasting perdition. "Whosoever will be saved, before all things it is necessary that he hold the Catholic Faith; which faith, except every one do keep whole and undefiled, without doubt he shall perish everlastingly;" and this faith it proceeds to set forth in a series of propositions which, to say the least, present a very enigmatical and paradoxical appearance, as for instance:— "Such as the Father is, such is the Son, and such is the Holy Ghost: the Father uncreate, the Son uncreate, and the Holy Ghost uncreate: the Father incomprehensible, the Son incomprehensible, the Holy Ghost incomprehensible: the Father eternal, the Son eternal, and the Holy Ghost eternal; and yet they are not three eternals, but one

eternal. As also there are not three incomprehensibles, nor three uncreated; but one uncreated and incomprehensible." These are propositions which an influential church, the established church of one of the most enlightened and powerful nations on Earth, holds up before men; and for doubting which it dooms them to eternal woe. This is done in the nineteenth century, and the world flatters itself that this age is somewhat in advance of previous ages.

The reviewer will not deny the facts which the Report states; nor, we imagine, will he controvert the principles to which it refers. We may, for the sake of illustration, take this case. Neither he nor any Protestant Christian will deny that there are great obstacles in Roman Catholic countries in the way of truth, and that it requires decision and moral courage for a man, born in one of those countries and educated by parents whom he loves, even to examine into, much more, to depart from the faith which they revere; and yet, neither he nor any other Protestant would wish or expect to be understood as claiming all bravery and all moral heroism for Protestants. With the same justice might the charge of making this offensive assumption be brought against him as

against the writer of that Report; who, we repeat, stated indisputable facts, and referred to incontrovertible principles; and who, moreover, in declaring that, however beautiful and sublime is the sentiment, which makes us shrink from doubting the opinions held by revered parents, "truth is first and above all," only reiterated the declaration of our Saviour, "he that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me."

The Review presents other misconceptions of the meaning and spirit of the writer of the Report and of the body of Christians with which he is connected, to which we will briefly allude. After quoting a passage from the Report, in which the belief of Unitarians in the Holy Spirit is stated in clear and strong language, in which "the great truth of the presence, power and influence of the Holy Spirit," is presented as "of unutterable importance, a truth full of consolation and hope, which lies at the foundation of spiritual religion; without which, religion would become mere formalism, and regeneration—that new birth, that spiritual renewal, without which one cannot enter the kingdom of heaven—a meaningless term," the reviewer expresses his "astonishment that the pressure of orthodoxy from with-

out should have extorted such averments from men who deny the personal existence of that blessed Spirit, &c." pp. 93, 94.

"Extorted such averments!" Singular language, this! What does the reviewer mean? That these declarations were not made freely but reluctantly, not because the heart of the writer prompted him to make them, but for policy's sake, and to impose upon his fellow Christians a statement of faith not justified by his real sentiments? We hope that the reviewer did not mean this; but if he did, we can assure him that the writer of the Report is too sincere a man to pursue such a course himself, and too high-minded a man to think of accusing any Christian gentleman of pursuing it. And, moreover, we can assure him that he entirely misunderstands the feelings and views of Unitarian Christians. They have no faith in the doctrine of mental reservation, and no occasion for it. Responsible for their opinions to no ecclesiastical body, sworn to support no human creed, accustomed to receive few courtesies from self-constituted guardians of orthodoxy, they probably have as few temptations to overstate or understate their opinions as any class of Christians in the wide world. The reli-

gious opinions which they form and express, are such as they believe the Sacred Scriptures teach, not such as they think "the pressure of orthodoxy extorts."

"The pressure of orthodoxy," forsooth! And where is this vaunted orthodoxy to be found? Our Roman Catholic friends, whose church has at least the respectability of consistency, for it openly denies the right of private judgment in matters of faith, and without hesitancy pronounces itself infallible, claim that they have it. But, fortunately or unfortunately, we cannot resign the right of private judgment; and to us, exercising that right, orthodoxy seems to have somewhat of chameleon-character, even under the auspices of Romanism; and, moreover, our Protestant friends deny the validity of the Romanist claim. Shall we then turn to some body of Protestants? But to which one? To the Episcopalian, and if so, to which section of that large and intelligent body? Shall it be to the English Episcopal church, with its threat of eternal damnation to all who cannot assent to the statements of the Athanasian creed? But even the good Archbishop Tillotson wished his church were well rid of that creed; and few, we imagine, of our

American Protestant Episcopalians would require of us an orthodoxy quite up, or quite down, to the standard of that venerable but somewhat unintelligible formula.

Shall we turn then to the American branch? But to which branch of the American branch? To the High Church or Low Church, for the differences seem very real between them? Are we told that the differences relate to non-essentials? It may be so, but certainly brethren ought not to be so widely separated, and so far alienated from each other on non-essentials, as to regard and denounce one another, as latitudinarian on the one side, and non-evangelical on the other, for differing thereupon. Or if turning from these distinctly-marked divisions, we still continue our search, shall we find the sought-for orthodoxy in that portion, whether it is large or small, we are unable to say, represented by an intelligent Bishop of the Episcopal Church, in the statement which he once made to the writer of these remarks, that he would like to have the church service so altered that pious Unitarians could conscientiously engage in it. For instance, that he would like to have the Nicene creed omitted, (not that he did not believe in it,

but because he regarded the Apostles' creed as containing all that was essential, and in a form acceptable to all Christians,) and such other changes made, as would enable a person with high Arian sentiments to join in it. Certainly this is a very liberal, and to many minds it would be a very striking as well as attractive, interpretation of the requirements of orthodoxy; but, unfortunately, we have little reason to believe that it would prove acceptable to the ministers and members of the Episcopal Church generally, at least if we are to regard the reviewer as a fair exponent of their sentiments, when he declared that Unitarianism, as represented in the Report, "denies, or leaves out, all that is worth contending for, as peculiar to Christianity, all that distinguishes it from Judaism or (as a doctrinal system) from Mohammedanism." (Review, p. 12.) The doctrine of the Report the reviewer pronounces Arianism, and Arianism he thinks no better than Mohammedanism, as far as all that is peculiar to Christianity is concerned, while the Bishop would gladly modify the Prayer book sufficiently to admit Arians into the Christian fold. Truly it may be said, and with more per-

tinency than in its original application, that orthodoxy is "*varium et mutabile.*"

If in our search for orthodoxy we turn in vain to the Episcopal Church, can we look with more confidence of success to other Protestant churches? Too many are the divisions among them, too strongly-marked the lines between the Old and New Schools, too little the confidence between Andover Congregationalism with its alleged latitudinarianism, and Princeton Presbyterianism with its alleged rigidity, to make one sanguine of better success with them.

Within a day or two we have seen some resolutions adopted by a Trinitarian association, in which the exposition of the doctrine of the Trinity, made by a devout and learned man, Dr. Bushnell, is pronounced unscriptural, heretical, and dangerous. Dr. Bushnell, on the other hand, contends that he holds the doctrine in its entirenesss, and in its original purity; and that his exposition is in perfect accordance with the teaching of the church universal, and with its accepted standards.

The various creeds and confessions have as signally failed in producing uniformity in doctrinal opinions, as in fostering unity of spirit.

Orthodoxy may be as real and attainable a thing as its advocates claim; but in sober earnest, perhaps because of our want of mental perspicacity, to us it seems as real as the mirage of the desert, and as attainable as the ever-receding horizon; and its advocates must excuse what they may call our presumption, when we declare, in all sincerity, that it must prove itself to be better defined and more scriptural than it has ever yet appeared; that its defenders must cease to denounce each other; its Dr. Sherlocks, on the one hand, must cease to declare any theory of the Trinity, which "says there are three divine persons, and not three distinct, infinite minds, to be both heresy and nonsense;" and its Dr. Souths, on the other hand, with the University of Oxford to support him, must cease to pronounce "the assertion, that there are three infinite, distinct minds and substances in the Trinity, false, impious and heretical;" the charge of heresy must cease to be sent like a shuttlecock to and fro by the battledoors of those who with equal confidence claim to be orthodox, before orthodoxy will become a very attractive object to Unitarians, or its "pressure" be very much felt or regarded by them; and in the

meantime, doing as well as we may without the reputation of orthodoxy, we will content ourselves with possessing in common with our fellow Christians the Sacred Scriptures, unspeakably precious to us all, and until they teach us that we are in error, we will continue, to quote the language of St. Paul, when his orthodoxy was questioned, "after the way which they call heresy to worship the God of our fathers, believing all things which are written in the law and the prophets."

And now we come to another apparent, if not real, misconception on the part of the reviewer of the position and views of Unitarian Christians. He says (p. 12) "it is to be regretted that the Conference at Louisville could not agree, as an expression of their belief, upon the very modest resolutions referred to the Committee the year before by the Conference at St. Louis." The resolutions referred to, or rather the resolution, for but one was offered, was this:

"*Resolved*, That we regard Jesus Christ not as a mere inspired man, but as the Son of God; the messenger of the Father to men, miraculously sent, the mediator between God and man; the Redeemer of the world. That we regard

the miracles of the New Testament as facts upon which the gospel is based."

The intimation of the reviewer is, that the reason for not adopting this resolution was, that the Conference, or a portion of its members, did not believe in the articles therein presented. That there are great and wide differences of opinion among Unitarians, no one denies. There has never been an attempt to deny this fact: no one wishes to deny it. It is a fact open, acknowledged. But this difference of opinion was not the reason for not adopting the resolution. The reason is clearly, explicitly, given in the resolutions which were adopted, viz. these:

Resolved, That we have heard with much profit the report of Judge Pirtle, and that it be referred to the Executive Committee to be printed.

Resolved, however, That under our organization, as the Conference of Western Unitarian Churches, we have no right to adopt *any statement of belief as authoritative, or as a declaration of the Unitarian faith, other than the New Testament itself, which is the divinely-authorized rule both of faith and practice.*

Here is the reason given in as intelligible a form, and as distinctly as possible, for the non-

adoption of the resolution—that to Unitarians "the New Testament is the divinely-authorized rule both of faith and practice." The reviewer in a note says, "do they reject the Old Testament? It would seem so."

"Seem so!" Entirely gratuitous and unjustifiable is this assumption. Had not the reviewer read the Report with sufficient care and thoroughness to observe its repeated references to that portion of the Sacred Volume—references made for the special purpose of showing the support therein given to the Unitarian views?

No, they do not reject it, and we regret that one, who feels himself called upon and competent to pronounce that Unitarians, as far as doctrines are concerned, are no better than Mohammedans, should have had so little acquaintance with their views and mode of worship, as not to know that they do not reject it. The New Testament is presented in the resolution not to the disparagement of the Old Testament, which was preparatory to it, like the law, "the school-master to bring us to Christ," but because it is distinctively and pre-eminently the book of Christianity, of our Lord and his apostles. The reviewer, in the same note, expresses his astonishment "that Unitarians lay

so much stress upon the New Testament." We thank him heartily for the admission. We do lay great stress upon it. It is infinitely precious to us, the book of Christ, the book of heaven.

But is he, a Christian man, really astonished that the New Testament, if a comparison is to be drawn between them, is dearer to us than the Old Testament; that the book, which represents our Saviour in glorious reality, which enables us, as it were, to stand face to face with him, awakens warmer love than that which predicts his advent; that the words, which fall from the lips of the Son of God himself, sink deeper into our hearts than the words of prophets and psalmists, though their lips were touched with fire from God's altar, and their harps were strung to the melodies of heaven? We do not love the Old Testament the less, but we love the New Testament more. But says the reviewer, "they will find much less exceptionable warrant for their system in the Old." Indeed! Thanks for that admission, too, for the truths, which Unitarians hold dear, seem to them to shine out from the New Testament with brilliancy like that of the noon-day sun, and if in the Old Testament they

shine with greater brilliancy, how surpassingly clear, how gloriously radiant they must be!

The reason then for not adopting the resolution, which seems almost to have won the love of the reviewer because it "has so demure and orthodox an air," was not that there were differences in opinion among the members of the Conference, whatever those differences may have been, but *that there was entire unanimity* in the Conference in regarding the New Testament as the divinely-authorized rule of faith and practice. The Conference thus unanimously expressed its desire and determination to stand on the same ground on which the great mass of Unitarian Christians have always aimed to stand, the sufficiency of the Scriptures, and the right of private judgment.

Does any one say, Why, this is the ground which Protestantism presents? True, and because it is Protestant ground, or rather because, as we believe, it is Christian ground, we aim always to stand upon it. Protestantism re-asserts the great principle announced by our Saviour and his apostles. "Be not ye called Rabbi, or Master," says Jesus, "for one is your Master, even Christ, and all ye are brethren; and call

no man your Father upon the earth—*i. e.* acknowledge the religious authority of no man, for one is your Father, which is in heaven."—Matt. xxiii. 8, 9. Here is the great principle clearly, unequivocally, announced by our Lord, the head of the church, that every individual is directly, constantly, immediately responsible in matters of faith to God and Christ, and not to man or any body of men. This principle strikes at the root of ecclesiastical domination, church tyranny, and it places Christian liberty, the mental and spiritual freedom of every Christian, on broad, deep, immovable, everlasting foundations. This is the principle reiterated again and again by St. Paul: presented in thrilling words, and gloriously illustrated in his life. "Stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ has made us free." This is the clarion charge of that great apostle of freedom. This is the noble principle which, when ecclesiasticism had trampled it under foot, Protestantism took up, inscribed upon its banner, and with its kindred principle, that man is to be justified by faith—*i. e.* by a living principle in his own heart, and not by priestly influence, or by compliance with prescribed forms, carried forth for the redemption of the world from spir-

itual bondage. Ecclesiasticism and individualism—the one declaring that the church must think for a man, and the other declaring that the man, availing himself gratefully of all aid, must think for himself—these are the two great antagonistic principles. The one Roman Catholicism openly avows, and the other is professed by Protestantism. *Professed*, we say, for too seldom has Protestantism been true to its profession. Troubled by the inconveniences of freedom, alarmed by the multiplicity of sects, afraid lest all things should tend to chaos, it has every now and then called in the aid of ecclesiasticism. Having placed the open Bible in a man's hand, and commanded him to read it and learn for himself the truths and duties taught therein, it has not unfrequently been frightened because the man has honestly and heartily complied with its injunction. Perhaps the man in his study of the sacred Volume, is led to embrace Unitarian views of Christianity, and to rejoice therein. "This will never do," says Protestantism, or at least so self-appointed guardians represent it as saying, "I commanded you to read the Bible for yourself; I have asserted your mental and spiritual freedom, and I still assert it. You have

perfect liberty to think for yourself. It is only Romanism that denies liberty to Christian men. But, then, you must remember, while you have entire liberty to think for yourself, that if you depart in the slightest degree from orthodoxy, it will be at your peril." "Yes," says the Church of England, that staunch defender of Protestantism, "you are at perfect liberty to think for yourself; and I will defend that liberty against all the Popes and Cardinals, and Inquisitors of Rome; but, remember that, unless you can look through my Athanasian spectacles, without doubt you will everlastingly perish. I merely hint this, though I would not for the world interfere with your Christian freedom."

And so other staunch defenders of Protestantism, though without much love for English Episcopacy, earnestly join with it in defending Christian liberty against the secret wiles and open assaults of Romanism. "The Bible—the Bible without note or comment, the open Bible, give it to every man. Let the Word of God speak for itself." But what have they to say to him to whom that Word seems to proclaim Unitarianism? "You have been doubtless honest in your investigations, and are sincere in your

conclusions; you appear to love God and Christ, and to be governed by the Holy Spirit, but unless you can see differently, unless you can come to the results which our confessions present, we cannot acknowledge you to be a Christian, we cannot admit you to the table of holy communion." Thus Protestantism, alarmed at seeing its own principles faithfully carried out, every now and then steps down from the high and broad table-land, on which Christianity bids it stand, to the ground of ecclesiasticism, and says to men, "you must form and express such religious opinions,—not as to your own individual mind the Scriptures seem to teach,—but such as the church, through its creeds and confessions, commands you to hold." Thus it practically denies its great principles—the right of private judgment, and the sufficiency of the Scriptures. It supplements the Scriptures by its creeds and confessions, and thus virtually does, or least attempts to do, though not in a manly and consistent way, what it denounces Roman Catholicism for doing openly, thoroughly and as a matter of principle.

Against this infidelity to the principles of Protestantism, Unitarian Christians protest.—

They know, for all history teaches, that the slightest divergence from these principles, prepares the way for and gradually leads to ecclesiasticism, with all its abuses and its crushing tyranny. They know that the Saviour and his apostles did not demand assent to a creed as the evidence of Christian discipleship, but faith in "Jesus as the Christ, the Son of God." This is the faith for possessing and avowing which, Jesus pronounced his benediction upon Simon Peter: "Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona; for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven."—Matt. xvi. 17. This is the faith on which our Lord declared that his church should stand as on a rock, so that the gates of hell should never prevail against it.

This is the faith, to produce and confirm which, St. John wrote his gospel. "These are written that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that, believing, ye might have life through his name."—John xx. 31. This is the New Testament Confession of Faith; and Unitarians, in common with all their fellow Christians, admit and assert that a church has a right to demand this from its members; but

more than this, as a test of Christian discipleship, it has no authority to demand; and if it demands more than this, it demands what Christ did not demand, and is guilty of usurpation and tyranny. If a man has faith in Jesus, as the Christ, and leads a Christian life, he has a right to the Christian name, and to the enjoyment of all Christian ordinances and privileges. It rests not with a church to say whether or not he is entitled to the name. Christ has answered that question. It is his not to ask as a favor, but to claim as a right.

This, then, is the ground which Unitarians hold in reference to creeds. They do not object to creeds as statements of religious opinion. Such statements any church or any individuals may make, and any may sign, whose hearts prompt, and whose consciences permit. It is to creeds as authoritative standards of faith, that they object. When claiming this character, Unitarians regard them as useless, inasmuch as they are powerless to produce uniformity of opinion, or even to preserve, on the part of their signers, a reputation for "orthodoxy." The recent discussions, in regard to the distinguished professors in the Andover Theological Seminary,

afford a striking instance of the inefficacy of creeds. The professors in that Institution are not only required to sign a creed, but also to renew their subscription every five years; and yet some of those very professors, men eminent for learning and undoubted integrity, are regarded by not a few brethren of the same denomination as having become dangerously unsound in faith.

The inefficacy of creeds is also signally illustrated in the principle avowed by Paley and others, that a man may conscientiously sign a creed even if he does not believe every thing contained in it, because in signing, he only declares that he substantially, in the main, accepts the doctrines presented. In other words, when a man subscribes to a creed, and thus declares his belief in it, he does not declare his belief in it, but in what *he regards as true in it.* Thus the individual man sits in judgment upon the creed; and the uniformity of opinion, so much boasted of, is found to be only uniformity of profession. A very circuitous way this, it must be confessed, of arriving at the conclusion that every man is to think for himself upon religious

matters, and not the way most favorable to mental and moral integrity.

Creeds, when claiming to be authoritative standards, are not only regarded by Unitarians as useless because of utter powerlessness to produce uniformity of opinion, but as injurious in making opinions, rather than faith and life, the test of Christian soundness. They are regarded, moreover, as anti-Christian in proposing a test which Christ never proposed, and the tendency of which is to repel many who, in sincerity and love, desire to see and be with Jesus. These are the principles which Unitarians hold in regard to creeds; and it was because of their firm adherence to these principles, and in illustration of them that, with entire unanimity, the Conference of Western Unitarian Churches declared that it had "no right to adopt any statement of belief as authoritative, or as a declaration of Unitarian Faith, other than the New Testament itself, which is the divinely-authorized rule both of faith and practice."

We will now notice another misconception by the reviewer of the opinions of Unitarian Christians. He charges them with denying the doctrine of the Atonement. "Few would anticipate

from the moderation and the semi-orthodox air that pervades a portion of this Report, that it concludes with a denial of the Atonement! Yet so it is."—Review, p. 113. And on page 143, he says, "we insert the entire passage of the Report, in which it is denied." The passage is as follows: "Unitarians believe that salvation by our Lord's mission is in all things of God's love to his sinful creatures; that Christ was not a substitution for us, to bear the wrath of God; that our sins were not imputed to him; that no satisfaction was demanded, and none was made. Some of them believe that whatever is said of sacrifice, in reference to the death of Christ, is merely figurative, so far as the similitude to the Jewish oblations is indicated: while others, among whom is the writer of this Report, believe that there was a real expiation in love to us: not to affect God, but in his wise and incomprehensible providence to accomplish our salvation."—p. 65. This is the passage quoted in support of the assertion that Unitarians deny the atonement; and, while quoting, he might have added to this passage another, found on page 56, of the Report, viz: "but his death was necessary on account of our sins. And

when we contemplate his sufferings, brought about by our transgressions, oh, what can so powerfully impress us with the awfulness of sin!" This is truly a singular mode in which to prove that a man denies a doctrine—to quote from him words in which his belief in the doctrine is expressly affirmed.

The passage does not deny the doctrine of the atonement; the Report does not deny it; Unitarians, as a body of Christians, do not deny it. They deny the correctness of what is assumed *as the orthodox theory* of the atonement; but to deny that is one thing, while the denial of the atonement itself is another and a very different thing.

To confound the truths of Christianity with the so-called orthodox interpretation of them, is no uncommon thing. "I am surprised," said a Trinitarian layman, to a Unitarian friend, "that you should deny the doctrine of the Trinity, when the Bible expressly states that there are three co-equal and co-eternal persons in the Godhead." "Show me that passage," replied the Unitarian, "and I will assent to the doctrine." With eagerness the man turned to his Bible, confident of finding it at once. Book after book,

chapter after chapter, was examined, but the passage could not be found; and, with somewhat of disappointment, he admitted to his friend that the passage was not in the Bible; "but," he added, and with a manner indicative of his opinion that he had found its full equivalent, "it *is* in my Confession of Faith." So men confound human creeds and confessions with the holy Scriptures, and human interpretations of the truths of Scriptures, and inferences drawn by men from those truths, with the truths themselves.

We now come, we will not say to the great mispresentation—for the reviewer, we trust, wrote in sincerity—but to his great misconception of the essential nature of Unitarianism. According to him, Unitarianism (he is speaking of the Unitarianism of the Report; but we suppose we do him no injustice in assuming that his remarks apply to Unitarianism generally) "denies, or at least leaves out, all that is worth contending for, as peculiar to Christianity, all that distinguishes it from Judaism, or (as a doctrinal system) from Mohammedanism." Review, p. 12.

Here, then, the position is distinctly taken that, so far as doctrines are concerned, Unitari-

anism is not a Christian system. It follows, of course, that Unitarians are not Christians.

We regret that, in this nineteenth century of the Christian era, any minister of the gospel should hold such an opinion in regard to a body of Christian believers, to whom he has reason to know the Gospel is as dear as to him or any other Christian; who, we may say without presumption, are as capable as he is of understanding what the gospel teaches. We rejoice, however, since he holds the opinion, that he has frankly avowed it, and that he has openly taken his position in accordance with it. We are glad that the Christian people of Louisville, with many of whom it has been and is our pleasure and privilege to hold relations of Christian friendship, should know what, in the judgment of one who occupies the responsible position of religious teacher, "orthodoxy" is and requires. It is well that members of the congregation to which the reviewer ministers, should know that, according to his interpretation of Christianity, and his view of its claims, such of their relatives and friends as are connected with the Unitarian Church, though they are bound to them by nature and affection's ties, and though they have

been accustomed to hold pleasant religious communion with them, cannot be regarded as Christians.

It is well that the issue should be presented and met. If the majority of the Christian people of this city, after due reflection, shall feel themselves called upon to take the position which the reviewer has taken, and to deny the Christian name to Unitarians, be it so. We shall regret their decision, but shall not be made unhappy by it. If, on the contrary, they shall conclude that men who heartily believe in Jesus, as the Christ, the Son of God, and endeavor to obey his laws, are entitled, whatever denominational title they may wear, to the Christian name, we shall rejoice as much for their sakes as for our own: as much, yes, more, for the fidelity thus manifested to the spirit of Christian liberty, than for the justice done to ourselves as humble members of the body of Christ.

Let us examine the position assumed by the reviewer, and see whether or not it be tenable.

The ground on which he bases his assumption that Unitarianism "denies, or at least leaves out, all that is worth contending for as peculiar to Christianity, all that distinguishes it from

Judaism, or (as a doctrinal system) from Mohammedanism," is indicated in the following sentence: "We are furnished by this Report with a categoric denial of these articles of the Christian faith: the deity of Christ, the humanity of Christ, the deity and personality of the Holy Ghost, the atonement of Christ, and original or birth sin."

Reserving, for the present, any remarks in regard to the deity of Christ, we invite attention to the other doctrines pronounced peculiar to Christianity, and which Unitarianism is charged with denying.

First, the humanity of Christ. The reviewer errs in stating that this is denied in the Report. The Report takes the ground, that the soul of Christ, that which dwelt in and manifested itself through his mortal frame, was a super-angelic soul; but it does not, therefore, deny his humanity. Of soul, we know little; and the connection of any soul with a mortal body is a transcendent mystery. When connected, how connected, we know not. We only know that it is God who connects the soul now with an earthly body, as hereafter He will connect it with a spiritual body. It is this connection with

a mortal body—this subjection to mortal limitations, which determines the humanity of a being, and not the position which his soul holds in the scale of existence. The fact, then, that the spirit of our Lord dwelt in a human form, and was subjected to mortal limitations, determines his humanity, to which all Unitarians hold, whether they adopt or not the theory of his pre-existence. That our Saviour's humanity was in all respects the same with the humanity of ordinary men, no Christian, who accepts the Scripture account of the miraculous conception, believes; and with the same justice, on the ground of believing the miraculous birth of Jesus, might all Christians, holding to that belief, be charged with denying his humanity, as Unitarians are charged with denying it, because of the views presented in the Report.

Secondly: The reviewer charges Unitarianism with being non-Christian, because of its denial of "the deity and personality of the Holy Ghost."

The reader will observe that it is not on the ground of denying the Holy Spirit, that Unitarians are pronounced un-Christian; for their belief is too clearly expressed in the Report, to permit this ground to be assumed. The reviewer

cannot deny their belief in the Holy Spirit. Nay, he admits it; for he quotes, at length, the passage in which their belief is clearly stated, and expresses his amazement that they do thus believe. He is astonished, to quote the language of the Report, that "Unitarians do believe in the Holy Spirit as imbuing our souls with good, testifying to our hearts of the Lord Jesus, saving us from our sins, and turning us to God, our Father; that the great truth of the presence, power, and influence of the Holy Spirit, is to us of unutterable importance." Nor is he alone in his astonishment; for it is no uncommon experience with those who have coolly assumed that Unitarians are not Christians, to be astonished when, having taken pains to ascertain what the views of Unitarians are, they learn that the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ, and all the facts and truths presented therein, are as cordially received, and as highly valued by them, as by any of their fellow-Christians.

Nevertheless, though the reviewer must admit that Unitarians believe in the Holy Spirit; that they regard "the great truth of the presence, power, and influence of the Holy Spirit, as of unutterable importance," he charges them with

being non-Christian. Why? Because, as he affirms, of their denial of the deity and personality of the Holy Spirit. The deity of the Holy Spirit the Report does not deny, Unitarianism does not deny. As well might the reviewer affirm that Unitarians deny the humanity of the spirit of man, as that they deny the deity of the spirit of God. But, says the reviewer, they deny the *personality* of the Holy Spirit. This they do deny — *i. e.*, as the Report clearly states, the distinct, independent personality. To Unitarians, there is, to quote the language of St. Paul, "but one God, the Father." They hold that there is but one person, one being, whom they are to regard as God, the Supreme Jehovah; and that person or being is he whom our Saviour teaches us to call "our Father." "When ye pray, say, Our Father which art in heaven." This is the being or person whom our Lord declares to be 'the only true God"—John xvii. 3—whom he pronounces "his Father and our Father; his God and our God."—John xx. 17. This language is positive, distinct beyond the possibility of misapprehension, and decisive; for it is the language of the Son of God. Taught by our Saviour, that *his Father*

and our Father is the only true God, we desire not to know—we dare not know—any other being or person as God. Of him, we think as God; to him, we pray as God, as Jesus has directed us to do, and to no other. This view, Unitarians hold as the Scripture view; and a view which causes all the declarations of the sacred Volume to be in mutual and perfect harmony. Here are a few of those declarations. David, in the fervent, heart-melting prayer recorded in the fifty-first Psalm, says, 11th verse, "take not thy Holy Spirit from me." This is his petition to God, not to take his Holy Spirit away. Jesus says, Luke xi. 14, "If ye, then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him!" St. Paul says, 1 Thes., iv. 8, "God, who hath also given unto us his Holy Spirit." Mark his words. He does not say that one person or being, in the Godhead, hath given another person or being, but that God hath given his Holy Spirit.

St. Peter, Acts x. 38, declares "how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost, and with power."

St. John says, 1 Epistle, iv. 13, "hereby

know we that we dwell in God, and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit." Such expressions, and the Scriptures abound in them, are perfectly clear, intelligible, and unequivocal; and they are all in entire harmony with each other, and with the view that has just been presented. Nor is there a single expression, or declaration of Scripture, which does not harmonize with it; and none are in more real and entire harmony with it, than those words of our Saviour —so unutterably dear to every heart which yearns for conformity to the divine will, and for that peace of God, which passeth understanding—recorded by the beloved disciple, John xiv. 16, 17, in which the assurance is given that, "The Father shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you forever, even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him; but ye know him, for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you."

This is the view which Unitarians hold in regard to God and his Holy Spirit, and which they hold because they believe it to be clearly, distinctly presented by the Saviour and his inspired apostles. The doctrine of the distinct, indepen-

dent personality of the Holy Spirit they reject, because they believe it at variance with this view. For what is personality? Webster defines it to be "that which constitutes an individual a distinct person, or that which constitutes individuality." When, then, the personality of the Holy Spirit is spoken of, the language must denote that the Holy Spirit is a distinct individual, a person with all the attributes essential to personality, so that he can be regarded as distinct from all other persons, and addressed as distinct. But what is meant by "a person"? It is not Dr. Channing alone, nor the writer of the Report alone, who teaches that when "a person" is spoken of, a distinct, conscious, intelligent being is meant. For what says Dr. Sherlock, already quoted, whose orthodoxy the reviewer does not appear to doubt? "It is plain the persons are perfectly distinct, *for they are three distinct and infinite minds, and therefore three distinct persons*, for a person is an intelligent being and to say there are three divine persons, and not three distinct, infinite minds, is both heresy and nonsense." Vind. of the Doct. of the Trinity, sec. 4, p. 66. Thus speaks Dr. Sherlock. And how does the reviewer him-

self speak? While stating that "a unity of will and comprehension seems essential even to our wholly inadequate conception of the most perfect Being," he says that "probably no writer has gone so far as to attribute to Father, Son, and Spirit a unity of consciousness." So he holds that each person has a distinct consciousness. When, then, the personality of the Holy Spirit is spoken of, we are to understand that the Holy Spirit is a distinct, infinite mind, a mind with a consciousness of its own. And here we would pause for a moment to ask if the existence of one such mind, does not preclude the existence of another such? We can conceive of any number of finite minds existing and co-existing, but does not the word "infinite," if we take it in its full, legitimate signification, and not as a vague, meaningless term, compel us to believe that there can be but one such mind?

But we will not dwell on this point. We are to understand that the Holy Spirit is a distinct, infinite mind, a mind with a consciousness of its own, and as the Athanasian creed teaches that the three divine persons are co-equal and co-eternal, it follows that the Holy Spirit is a being, a person or individual with distinct conscious-

ness, with infinite mind and eternal existence; and what is such a being but God? And if there are three such beings or persons, there are three Gods, and that is the conclusion which follows legitimately from the premise that there are three persons in the divine nature. We do not say that our Trinitarian friends believe in three Gods. We know that they do not. Fortunately for them, the unity of God is so plainly taught in the Scriptures, presented in such unmistakable terms, that they are saved from the tritheistic conclusion to which the doctrine of three persons, i. e. three distinct, infinite minds, would necessarily lead them. They have reason to thank God that the Bible preserves them from the last, the legitimate results of what is popularly, but incorrectly, termed Athanasian Trinitarianism. Their faith in the Word of God, like a guardian angel, has held them back from the conclusion to which the words of men would inevitably have driven them. Their faith indeed saves them, but, in saving them, utterly destroys their argument.

Sometimes an attempt is made to invalidate such reasoning as we have presented, by assuming that in some mysterious way these three are

united into one being. The attempt is vain. That assumption throws a blinding, deluding mist over the subject, but it does not in the slightest degree affect the soundness of our argument. Nor is the force of the argument impaired by the assertion to which men are driven by the difficulties of the Trinitarian hypothesis —that the whole subject of the divine nature and existence is far beyond human comprehension. None admit more readily than Unitarians that no finite mind can fully comprehend the infinite mind. But then we say to our Trinitarian friends, if you feel and admit the subject to be incomprehensible, cease dogmatizing upon it. If your words and propositions in reference to it are confessedly poor, inadequate, unsatisfactory, do not try to impose them upon us. And, moreover, we say, do not take refuge behind the incomprehensibility of the subject, for the sake of shielding yourselves from the difficulties which you yourselves have created. The only way in which that argument can be invalidated is to affirm that by personality personality is not meant, but something else, and that something else a thing about which no one, no finite being, knows anything. This is the mode employed

by the reviewer. He says pp. 22, 23, "we must not be understood as denying that the Deity has personality. We only deny that it has been or can be predicated of the Trinity in the same sense that it can be of each member thereof. If, in its ordinary application, it be applicable to the whole, then it is not so to the constituents." If, then, the term personality be applied to each member of the Trinity in some other than its ordinary signification, what is that signification? The reviewer does not state. Nay more, he gives his readers to understand that no one can state. "No one has ever succeeded in stating, affirmatively, what the distinction and what the relation between the sacred Three is." p. 24. He quotes, moreover, from Professor Stuart, "whose profound and scholarly treatise on the Trinity presents the strongest scriptural argument possible in its defense," the following statement: "The word *person* was introduced into the creeds of ancient times merely as a term which would express the disagreement of Christians in general with the reputed errors of the Sabellians and others of similar sentiment, who denied the existence of any *real distinction* in the Godhead and asserted that Father, Son, and

Holy Ghost were merely *attributes* of God," &c. With great pertinency might the reviewer have quoted in this connection the language of a man of profounder intellect and greater authority, though not a better man, not a truer Christian, than Professor Stuart. Difficult indeed would it be to find one, any where, in whom large attainments and general scholarship were more beautifully combined with Christian piety and humility, than in him, whom in many respects we may fitly term the American Neander. Augustine, in his treatise on the Trinity, says: "In truth, since the Father is not the Son, and the Son is not the Father, and the Holy Spirit, who is also called the gift of God, can neither be the Father nor the Son, there are at any rate three; yet, when it is asked *what* three? straightway great poverty weighs upon human speech; yet we say, *three persons, not because that is what should be said, but that we may not keep silence.*" Perhaps in such a case it would be wiser to keep silence.

The reviewer, then, when he uses the term 'personality,' does not mean personality, but something else, some distinction in the Godhead, which "no one has ever succeeded in sta-

ting affirmatively," and yet he would withhold the Christian name from Unitarians, who, he knows, heartily believe in the Holy Spirit, because attaching to the word personality its legitimate meaning—a meaning which so orthodox a believer as Sherlock pronounces its true meaning—they deny the applicability of the term to the Holy Spirit. Let the reviewer state the doctrines held by him and those who agree with him, in intelligible terms; let him employ those terms always in the same sense—not giving now one and now another signification, to meet some special exigency and to save himself from a tritheistic conclusion; and let him show that the doctrines thus stated are plainly taught in the Scriptures, and then if Unitarians deny those doctrines, he may, with some grace, deny them the Christian name. Until then, Christian charity, to say nothing of Christian justice, would seem to indicate the propriety of recognizing as fellow-believers and as members of the same great family, those who, he has no reason to doubt, love the gospel with as warm an affection as glows in his own heart, and are as sincerely desirous as any who belong to the fold of the great Shepherd, of learning the truth as it is in Jesus. But

whether the name be given or withheld by their fellow-Christians matters little to Unitarians. Grateful to the Saviour for the revelation of the great, the inestimable truth of the Holy Spirit, that truth which brings the infinite Jehovah from the throne of the universe near to the heart of even the lowliest child, which assures us that the spirit of mortal man can be visited by the spirit of the good God, and can be strengthened in the time of moral weakness, enlightened in the season of darkness, comforted in sorrow's trying hour, and thus be carried through life's temptations and perplexities and be prepared for the purity and bliss of the spiritual world; grateful for this truth of truths and for the promise so graciously vouchsafed that the Holy Spirit shall be given to every one who earnestly seeks it—that Spirit which imparts the knowledge of the only true God and of his beloved Son, and which is the fountain of spiritual life to the church of Christ as well as to individual men—Unitarian Christians will cherish this truth more and more, and will seek with ever-increasing eagerness for the blessing divinely promised. And in welcoming this truth to their hearts they believe that they are in harmony with the great mass of ear-

nest, devout Christians of every name, to whom, whatever may be their variety of speculations about the truth of the Holy Spirit, it is *that truth* itself which is dear, and which, cordially embraced, leads to that true, heart-felt service, "that inward service," which, as Neander says, "proceeds from the consciousness of communion with God obtained through Christ, the Son of God, and of participation of his Spirit, the spirit of child-like relation to God, the spirit of adoption and of love."—(Planting and Training of the Christian Church, page 260.)

3d. The reviewer assumes that Unitarianism is not entitled to the Christian name because it denies the atonement of Christ. We have already shown that the Report, so far from denying the doctrine of atonement or reconciliation, expressly affirms it, but the topic is one of profound interest, and, therefore, we return to it.

The doctrine of atonement, or reconciliation —for, as every reader of the Scriptures knows, the word atonement occurs but once in the New Testament, Romans v. 11, and then is the same word elsewhere translated reconciliation, and, in the old English use of the term, atonement or at-one-ment and reconciliation were frequently

used as synonymous terms—the doctrine of atonement or reconciliation is not only a Christian doctrine, but one of the most deeply interesting, vital, and characteristic doctrines of Christianity. "All things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation; to wit, that God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them, and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation."—2 Cor. v. 18, 19. Here is the doctrine presented strongly, distinctly, but with no more strength and distinctness than in many other passages. The great doctrine, the glorious truth, shines out from the New Testament with the brightness of the mid-day sun. And this truth Unitarians are charged with denying. As soon would they think of denying that the fatherhood of God is a doctrine of Christianity, as of denying that the doctrine of atonement or reconciliation is a Christian doctrine. Deny it! To no Christians is it dearer—by none is it regarded with profounder interest. To them Christianity is pre-eminently a religion of reconciliation. Deny it! What do they deny? That "God so loved the world, that he gave his only-

begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish but have everlasting life"? No; by none are these words of the Saviour, all fragrant as they are with heavenly love, more heartily welcomed, by none are they more highly valued, than by Unitarian Christians. Deny it! Do they deny that "in this was manifested the love of God toward us, because God sent his only-begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him"? Into no hearts do these words of the beloved disciple sink deeper than into the hearts of Unitarian Christians. Deny it! Do they deny that "it is better, if the will of God be so, that ye suffer for well-doing than for evil-doing, for Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God"? No; for by none are these words of St. Peter, so rich at once in instruction and consolation, more cordially welcomed than by Unitarian Christians. These words, and all the words of Holy Writ, in which the heart-moving, hope-kindling doctrine is presented, are to them of priceless value, freighted as they are with the heavenly assurance of pardon and peace.

What, then, do Unitarians deny? Certainly not the Christian doctrine of atonement or rec-

onciliation. But they do deny, and with all earnestness protest against, the doctrine that the atonement was a display of the wrath of God, or that it was needed and designed to make God willing to forgive. This they protest against as a doctrine at utter variance with the doctrine of St. John, "herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins;" with the thrilling declaration found in Ezekiel xxxiii. 11, "As I live, saith the Lord, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his his way and live;" with the declaration of the Psalmist, Ps. cxlv. 8, that "the Lord is gracious and full of compassion, slow to anger and of great mercy;" and with all those passages, in which both the Old and New Testaments abound, which present the King of kings as the heavenly Father—as a God of infinite love.

Unitarians do not deny the great, the vital, truths presented in what may be called the sacrificial passages of the Bible, such as: "For this is my blood of the New Testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins."—Matt. xxvi. 26. "Jesus Christ, the righteous, is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but

also for the sins of the whole world."—1 John, i: 1, 2. "Then saith he, lo, I come to do thy will, O God. By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all."—Heb. x: 9, 10. But they do deny and repel with horror that doctrine of imputation which Luther brought out with appalling distinctness when he declared that under "the burden of the imputed sins of mankind Christ became the greatest transgressor, murderer, adulterer, thief, rebel, and blasphemer that ever was or could be in all the world." To them the doctrine which justifies a believer in it in making such a statement—a statement sufficient to chill the blood as it courses through the veins—seems as odious to reason and affection as it is directly antagonistic to the explicit assertions of the Bible, and to the spirit which pervades the sacred volume, which teaches that God is a being of perfect truth and justice, who looks upon the guilty as guilty and upon the innocent as innocent, and who always regarded his only-begotten Son with infinite affection, and who surely never could have regarded Jesus as more worthy of that affection, than when, in obedience to the dictates

of heavenly love, he willingly submitted to a cruel, agonizing death.

"The doctrine of the death of Christ," says the reviewer, "being a 'substitution' for the death of sinning men is the foundation-stone of the Christian religion." By this the reviewer, as he explicitly states, means that Christ died *instead of* men. *Died instead of* men! What kind of death does he mean? Is it physical death? But have not men died since our Saviour met his cruel death? Has a single human being been exempt from the great law of mortality? Then not in this sense has Christ died *instead of* men.

Is it spiritual death? Does the reviewer coincide with Calvin and hold what an earnest writer, who claims to be a sincere believer in the doctrine of the atonement, calls the truly horrible doctrine, that "Christ descended into hell when crucified and suffered the pains of the damned for three days"? Is it thus that he interprets the third of the Thirty-nine Articles of his church? Does he hold a view according to which, to quote again from the eloquent writer just referred to, Dr. Bushnell, "God will have his modicum of suffering some how—if he lets the guil-

ty go, will yet satisfy himself out of the innocent? In which the divine government, instead of clearing itself, assumes the double ignominy, first of letting the guilty go, and secondly of accepting the sufferings of innocence! In which, Calvin, seeing no difficulty, is still able to say, when arguing for Christ's three days in hell—'it was requisite that he should feel the severity of the divine vengeance, in order to appease the wrath of God and satisfy his justice.'"

We trust that this is not what the reviewer means by 'substitution.' We trust that he does not hold a doctrine which seems to us so utterly unsanctioned by Scripture, so repugnant to reason and justice. But we confess we know not what he does mean—what any one means—by declaring that Christ died *instead of* men. We can understand, and most heartily do we believe, that Christ died *for* us, *in our behalf, for our sake.* This is the scriptural representation, and a most affecting representation it is, of a vital, essential truth.

The death of Christ Unitarians do not regard as a literal sacrifice. It was upon no altar, but upon a cross, that Jesus died; and he was not put to death by officers of religion and with reli-

gious rites, but he was basely, foully murdered by cruel men. But they do not deny that on the part of Jesus it was a real sacrifice, an offering of himself, that he voluntarily died, the just for the unjust, to bring us unto God, and that in the providence of God his death is intimately connected with the redemption of the world. As they look to the cross, and behold the meek and holy One, God's well-beloved Son, enduring the agonies of a terrible death, they witness such an exhibition of the utter malignity of sin, as was never made before, and has never been made since; and as they hear his voice breathing forth amid those agonies the prayer for his murderers, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do," their hearts are touched and melted, as the hearts of their fellow-Christians have always been; as all hearts, capable of emotion, must ever be touched and melted by this revelation of divine love; and in reverence and gratitude they are ready to join with St. Paul in declaring that "God commendeth his love toward us in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us;" and that "neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor

depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

Let, then, the reviewer and those whose religious opinions accord with his, say, if they will, that they regard the Unitarian theory of the atonement as unsatisfactory; let them say as often as they will and wherever they will that Unitarians deny the so-called orthodox theory of the atonement; but let them not say that Unitarians deny the atonement, for to none is this great Christian doctrine dearer, and none more fervently desire than they to understand the doctrine fully, and to have their hearts through Christ reconciled unto God, their sins pardoned, and their lives brought into harmony with his holy will. Most heartily can we respond to the words of Neander, whose piety and Christian soundness few would venture to impugn, when speaking, in his History of the Christian church vol. 1, p. 640, of the language of the early fathers in regard to the work of Christ as the Redeemer, and having stated that in their language we find "all the elments which lie at the basis of the doctrine as it afterwards came to be defined in the church," he goes on to characterize these elements,as "ground-

ed in the Christian consciousness itself, and indicating how Christ manifested himself to the religious feelings and to the intuitions thence resulting, *as a deliverer from sin and its consequences, a restorer of harmony in the moral order of the universe, a bestower of divine life to human nature.*" This beautiful and striking representation of the nature of Christ's work of redemption we gladly accept as perfectly accordant with the teachings of the sacred Volume, and as entirely satisfactory to the deep emotions of the Christian heart.

Very gratifying is it to know that the best thinkers in the Christian church have expressed themselves upon this, as upon other important topics, without dogmatism and without denunciation. Thus speaks the great and good Bishop Butler, whose "Analogy of Religion" reminds one of the coat of armor, the "ring-cuirass," worn by the knight of old, every thought strong as steel, and all the thoughts riveted firmly, compactly together. "Some have endeavored to explain the efficacy of what Christ has done and suffered for us, beyond what the scripture has authorised; others, probably because they could not explain it, have been for taking it away,

and confining his office, as Redeemer of the world, to his instruction, example, and government of the church: whereas the doctrine of the gospel appears to be, not only that he taught the efficacy of repentance, but rendered it of the efficacy which it is, by what he did and suffered for us: that he obtained for us the benefit of having our repentance accepted unto eternal life; not only that he revealed to sinners that they were in a capacity of salvation, and how they might obtain it; but, moreover, that he put them into this capacity of salvation by what he did and suffered for them; put us into a capacity of escaping future punishment and obtaining future happiness. And it is our wisdom thankfully to accept the benefit, by performing the conditions upon which it is offered on our part, without disputing how it was procured on his." (Analogy part ii. 172.) To words thus uttered it is a pleasure and a privilege to listen, and the thoughts, which they express cannot but be regarded with profound interest by every serious and earnest mind.

4th. Unitarianism is pronounced non-Christian, by the reviewer, because it denies "original or birth sin." What is "original or birth sin?"

Let us understand exactly what is meant by this expression, and then we can say whether the doctrine intended to be presented in the expression, is denied or not; for, as we all know, much of the difference among Christians is attributable to the misunderstanding, or non-ununderstanding of the terms employed by them.

The expression "birth sin," though much employed by theologians, we are frank to say, seems to us, in itself considered, to be an absolutely-unintelligible, because self-contradicting, expression. "Birth sin." Why, what is sin? Take the definition given by Professor Stuart, whose orthodoxy the reviewer, as we have seen, estimates very highly, that it is "the voluntary transgression of a known law of God, by a responsible being." This is a just and satisfactory definition. Understand sin in this sense, and the expression, "birth sin," becomes meaningless; for, if sin is a voluntary transgression of a known law of God, then, of course, no one is to be viewed as a sinner until he is guilty of such transgression—*i. e.* until he actually sins whereas, the term "birth sin" would seem to imply that a man is a sinner by birth, by virtue of the nature which he inherits, even before he

is guilty, either in purpose or in act, of any transgression. In other words, he is a sinner before he sins, or has any intention of sinning; a proposition rejected at once by common sense and common humanity. Is there a man living, who, whatever his theology may be, regards an infant, smiling in its mother's arms, as a sinner, and as obnoxious to the punishment due a sinner? No man, with the head of a man, and the heart of a man, can thus regard that young and guileless being. We therefore regard the expression, "birth sin," as self-contradictory; and we take it for granted that the doctrine, which it is employed to present, cannot be that which on its face it seems to present, and which it must present, if the word "sin" be used in its legitimate signification. But if we are mistaken in our inference, if the expression is used to teach the doctrine that the human being is a sinner before he transgresses, or is capable of trangressing, the law of God, a sinner by virtue of the nature inherited, then we reject it, and protest against it, as not only repulsive to common sense, and common humanity, but as directly antagonistic to the teaching of our Saviour, when, taking little children in his arms, he

pronounced his blessing upon them, and declared "of such is the kingdom of heaven."

Again. When the term "birth sin" is employed, is it employed for the purpose of teaching that man inherits a nature so utterly corrupt and vile, that he is altogether prone to evil, and altogether hostile to good? If this be the doctrine taught, the reviewer is right in asserting that Unitarians deny it. How can they help denying it, when an inspired apostle expressly asserts, that "when the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these having not the law, are a law unto themselves, which shew the work of the law written in their hearts."—Rom. ii. 14, 15. What! do *by nature* the things contained in the law, when that nature renders them utterly averse to all things contained in the law, and utterly incapable of doing them? St. Paul was never the man to reason in that inconsequential way. Very false would Unitarians be to themselves, and to their veneration for the religion of Jesus, if they did not reject a doctrine which seems to them to stand in direct antagonism to the teaching of his own inspired and commissioned apostles; and, also, directly to impugn

the justice of God. For, as stated in the Report, to create a being with a nature wholly inclined to evil, and then require of him an obedience which his nature makes him incapable of rendering, would be injustice, tyranny.

"But," says the reviewer, "no one has ever said that God made man with a nature wholly inclined to evil."—Review, p. 137, and he, moreover, says "we do not believe with this Committee, that 'God made us as we are, imperfect and liable to sin.'" Rather noticeable declarations, these. "No one has ever said that God made man with a nature wholly inclined to evil." The reviewer surely does not mean to assert that no one has ever said that man's nature is wholly inclined to evil, for he is endeavoring to prove Unitarians unworthy of the Christian name, because of their rejection of this doctrine. His position, then, must be that no one ever said that *God made* man with such a nature. But does not the reviewer believe that God is the creator of every man? Does he believe that God only created *one* man, and deny that He has created all other men? We have been accustomed to regard Him as the creator of all men; and we have supposed that the prophet Malachi, ii. 10, quite

clearly indicates that this is the correct view, when he says, "have we not all one father? Hath not one God created us?" If we were wont to stigmatize our fellow-Christians as some of them are wont to stigmatize us, we might say that to deny that God is the creator of all men, is to deny a very plain doctrine of the Bible, and to assume a very *heretical* position. But it is neither our custom nor our wish, to attach odious epithets to men, whom we have every reason to believe sincere in their profession of love for Christianity, because of their differing in opinion or interpretation from us; and, moreover, we regard the word "heretic," in the manner in which it is commonly used, as altogether un-Protestant, and un-American. Most cordially do we assent to the words of that eminent scholar and large-minded man, George Campbell, D. D., of Aberdeen, at the close of his ninth Preliminary Dissertation: "I shall conclude with adding to the observations on the words *schism* and *heresy*, that however much of a schismatical or heretical spirit, in the apostolic sense of the term, may have contributed to the formation of the different sects into which the Christian world is at present divided, no person, who, in

the spirit of candor and charity, adheres to that which, to the best of his judgment, is right, though in this opinion he should be mistaken, is in the scriptural sense either schismatic or heretic; and that he, on the contrary, whatever sect he belong to, is more entitled to these odious appellations, who is most apt to throw the imputation upon others. Both terms—for they denote only different degrees of the same bad quality—always indicate a disposition and practice unfriendly to peace, harmony, and love."

The other assertion, is equally remarkable—that God did not make man imperfect and liable to sin. *Not liable to sin.* If Adam was not liable to sin, pray, how did he sin: how could he sin? This is a strange view. Here is a man, the first man, who certainly did sin; the consequences of whose sin we all feel and lament; and yet, according to the position taken by the reviewer, he was created perfect, without liability to sin.

Now, it may be, that owing to our want of acumen, to our dullness in regard to subjects of abstruse, metaphysical nature, we cannot understand what is intelligible enough to more acute minds; but, really, we must confess, humiliating as the confession may seem, that it

baffles us to comprehend how a perfect being—a being free from liability to sin, could sin. To our simplicity, this appears more than a mystery, a complete paradox.

And, moreover, admitting that in some, to us incomprehensible, way it is possible that a perfect being, without liability to sin, can sin, this view seems to us to present that being, perfect as he was, as really a weaker and worse being than any of his descendants; for they have a nature which all Christians admit to have been weakened, impaired, marred by transmitted evil tendencies, and which some, many Christians represent as utterly corrupt and vile, a nature which renders them liable to sin, while he, a perfect being, sinned, although he had no liability to sin!

But, to come directly to the main point, as to what is meant by "birth sin." We suppose that the reviewer has given his definition of it in the following words, which form part of a sentence on page 137: "We believe that 'God made man upright;' that man fell into sin, and thus corrupted his posterity, who inherited sin from Adam just as they would have inherited scrofula." "To inherit sin." This expression, if we

are to take Professor Stuart's definition, and regard "sin as a voluntary transgression of a known law of God, by a responsible being," seems to us a solecism; for how can a man inherit that which, as far as he is concerned, cannot *be* until he has actually purposed or done it? But probably the reviewer means by sin, sinful tendencies; and if this is what he means, then he has less occasion than he imagines, for denying the Christian name to Unitarians. They do not deny that sinful tendencies are inherited; nor, on the other hand, do they deny that good tendencies are inherited. They believe that men are, as the Report states, imperfect and liable to sin; and they believe, moreover, as the Report also states, though the reviewer seems not to have understood the statement—for he has entirely, though we hope unintentionally, misrepresented its purport—that they have a nature, which, with God's gracious and kindly assistance, renders them capable of religious obedience. Few Unitarians would dissent from the view presented by Neander, in his History of the Planting and Training of the Christian Church, page 240, of the doctrine of St. Paul, in regard to human nature. "Paul certainly

represents a corruption of human nature as the consequence of the first sin, and admits a supremacy of the sinful principle in the human race; but not in such a manner that the original nature of man, as the offspring of God, and created in his image, has been thereby destroyed. Rather he admits the existence in man of two opposing principles — the predominating sinful principle, and the divine principle depressed and obscured by the former, yet still more or less manifesting its heavenly origin." It is this "divine principle" which Unitarians believe the Saviour came to raise from its depression, to bring out of its obscurity, and make the ruling, living, illumining principle of our nature, that man, redeemed from the thraldom of sin, may walk abroad in the glorious liberty of the sons of God, the liberty wherewith Christ makes man free.

5th. The reviewer pronounces Unitarianism non-Christian, because of its denial of "the Deity of Christ."

The Deity of Christ! What are we to understand by the term—Deity? Webster defines it, 1st. "Godhead-divinity; the nature and essence of the Supreme Being." And 2d. "God,

the Supreme Being, or infinite self-existing Spirit." When, then, "Deity" is predicated of any person, that person is presented to us as possessed of the nature and the essence of the Supreme Being; or, in other words, he is presented as God, with all the attributes of God. With *all* the attributes, we say; for, if possessed of but a portion of them, he cannot, with any propriety, be called by the name Deity. To ascribe Deity to a person, and then deny him even one of the attributes of Deity, is simply to play fast and loose with an expression, to use words as Talleyrand is said to have used them, for the purpose of concealing thought; for Deity, without all the attributes of Deity, is no Deity. The word is a misnomer.

When, then, Deity is predicated of Christ, the expression means, if it means anything, that Christ is God—the Supreme God, possessed of all the attributes of the Supreme God. To say that this is not what is meant by the expression, and that when Deity is predicated of him, he is not pronounced the Supreme God, but God in some other sense, a derived, subordinate God, is simply to throw dust in the mental eyes of men; for, to Christians, all of whom profess to

believe that there is "but one God, and none other but he," how can there be any subordinate God? When, then, men ascribe Deity to Christ, they must take one of two positions — either they must say with Swedenborg, that Jesus Christ is veritably the Supreme God, or, they must say, that, when they use the term Deity, they do not mean Deity, but something else. *This second position is the position virtually taken by the reviewer*, and of that we shall speak presently; but now we call the reader's attention to the other, viz: that when men ascribe Deity to Christ, they declare him to be the Supreme God, possessed of all the attributes of the Supreme God. This doctrine, Unitarian Christians, in all ages and in all lands, deny. Not only do they deny it, but they protest against it, as in their opinion, utterly at variance with, directly antagonistic to, the great fundamental doctrine of the Old and the New Testaments, the doctrine of the strict unity, and the sole supremacy of Jehovah, the one God.

They deny it because we are expressly taught in the holy Scriptures, on the highest authority, that there is but one God, and that the Being, whom we are directed to call *our Father*, is that

God. The great apostle, St. Paul, says, 1 Cor. viii. 6, "To us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him." How could language be clearer, stronger, more decisive? "To us there is but *one God, the Father.*"

Equally explicit is the language of him, one authoritative declaration of whom is worth more —if our reverence would permit us for a moment to compare the words of him, who spake as never man spake, with the words of fallible men—than all the creeds that have ever been formed;—creeds formed for the most part by men who have endeavored to be wise above what was written, and thus "have darkened counsel by words without knowledge." In the solemn prayer recorded in the seventeenth chapter of the gospel according to St. John, our Saviour says, in the third verse, "This is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent." Surely no words can be plainer, more decisive, than these. Here we have the declaration of our Lord, in the most solemn manner in which it can be given, that the Being to whom he addressed his

earnest petition, and to whom he taught his disciples to pray, "is *the only true God.*" The Trinitarian formula is, that Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit—two distinct persons according to that formula—must unite with a third person, the Father, to form the one true God. The express assertion of our Saviour is, that *the Father is the only true God.* Take who will, the formula, we take the declaration of Jesus. On this we stand; and, standing on this, we stand firmly. We feel that we rest upon the authority of the Rock of Ages. This sublime prayer must be torn out of the gospel of the beloved disciple; every hallowed and hallowing remembrance of it must be obliterated from the memory of man, before we can cease to believe that "the Father is the only true God;" and, so long as we believe this great fundamental truth, will it be impossible for us to believe in the "deity" of Christ—*i. e.* to believe that Christ is the Supreme God.

And in this connection we may remark that it is to us incomprehensible, that our Episcopalian friends, with this prayer of our Saviour before them, and with this explicit declaration, "when ye pray, say, our Father," also before them, should

permit their solemn and beautiful service—most of the prayers in which are truly scriptural, being addressed to the heavenly Father, through his Son,—to be marred with that utterly unscriptural form of petition in the Litany: "Oh Holy, blessed and glorious *Trinity*, *three persons and one God*, have mercy upon us miserable sinners." We need not adopt the strong language of John Calvin, "I dislike this vulgar prayer, 'Holy Trinity, one God! have mercy on us!' as altogether savoring of barbarism;" but this we must say, without presuming to judge our fellow Christians, that since our Saviour has expressly taught us that the Father is the only true God, and that to Him we are to pray, we should not dare to pray to any other being. Let the words of Christ stand, though all litanies perish. His are the words of eternal life.

2d. Unitarians deny the doctrine of the Deity of Christ, because he has expressly declared that the high powers, which are adduced by Trinitarians in proof of his Deity, were *given* unto him, not being his originally, and because he has expressly disclaimed the possession of some of the attributes essential to Deity. In the closing part of St. Matthew's gospel, in the very passage

quoted as often as any in proof of the Deity of Christ, Jesus expressly declares, (chap. 28, v. 18,) "all power is given unto me in heaven and in earth." Sometimes the passage is read with a strong, overwhelming emphasis upon the words 'all power,' and with a triumphant tone, indicating on the part of the reader, that omnipotence is here ascribed to Jesus, and that thus his deity is proved. But what will the reader do with the expression, "*is given*"? Was power ever given to Jehovah? Is he not in himself omnipotent? Could any passage more plainly teach, than this famous proof-passage, that Jesus is not originally the possessor of omnipotence; in other words, that he is not the Supreme God?

And if we desire a striking, beautiful, and satisfactory illustration of the meaning of the expression, "all power," we need ask for no other than that given by St. Paul in his 1st epistle to the Corinthians, when he says, in the fifteenth chapter, 24–28 verses, "Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power. For he must reign till he hath put all enemies under his feet. The last enemy that shall be destroy-

ed is death. For he hath put all things under his feet. But when he saith, All things are put under him, it is manifest that he is excepted which did put all things under him. And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all." A very significant and remarkable passage is this. Let its language be carefully noted: "*He is excepted which did put all things under him.*" "*Then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all*"—language which cannot be interpreted to mean anything else than that the power which the Son possesses and exercises is power not inherent in him, but power derived from a Being distinct from him and superior to him. The passage is therefore absolutely conclusive against the doctrine of the deity of Jesus. It shows, with the clearness and certainty of demonstration, that Jesus is not the Supreme God. Thus the divine power possessed by Jesus is explicitly declared by himself to be not inherent, but derived. Equally positive and decisive is his language in regard to his authority as Judge: "The Father hath given him authority to exe-

cute judgment also, because he is the Son of Man." John v. 27. The authority he possesses, but, as he plainly teaches, it is not inherent but *given him* by the Father.

Self-existence is sometimes attributed to the Saviour, but his own view we have in the 26th verse of this same chapter: "For as the Father hath life in himself, so hath *he given* to the Son to have life in himself." Like the divine power wielded by him, and the divine authority possessed by him as Judge, the 'life' which he lives is ascribed entirely to the Father.

The omniscience of Christ is adduced in proof of his Deity, but omniscience he explicitly disclaims, Mark xiii. 32, "But of that day and that hour knoweth no man, no not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father." The reader will observe how exact, how discriminative this passage is. First, man is spoken of, then angels, then the Son, as if clearly to indicate his exalted, his super-angelic position and nature, and yet, in this high position and character, he says, that "of that day and that hour he knoweth not." Thus plainly does he disclaim omniscience, an attribute which, not-

withstanding his disclaimer, many of his followers have eagerly claimed for him.

Thus then stands the case. Deity is attributed to Christ because of his possession of divine powers and attributes. In regard to those powers and attributes, Jesus asserts that some of them he does not possess, and that those, which he does possess, are not his inherently, but are given or lent to him by the Father. This argument, an argument given to us by the Saviour himself, seems to Unitarians complete and decisive. They cannot regard Jesus as the Supreme God, when Jesus expressly teaches that he is not the Supreme God, but that the Father is "the only true God," of whom he is the Son.

To this fundamental doctrine, they firmly and constantly adhere; and, with this doctrine, they believe that every sentence, that every word of the sacred Scriptures harmonizes. Very ready are they to admit that a few passages are to be found which are difficult of interpretation—difficult of interpretation, not only by Unitarians, but by all Christians, as the diversity of explanations among commentators, unequivocally shows. But, while Unitarians readily admit the difficulty in interpreting such passages, they feel them-

selves justified in asserting—nay, they feel that the truth of God, as presented in the Sacred Volume, compels them to assert, that there is not a passage which is not capable of being interpreted so as to harmonize entirely with this fundamental doctrine; and that such interpretation is the true, the sound interpretation. Take, for instance, the introduction to St. John's gospel, perhaps of all passages the one most frequently and confidently quoted in proof of the Deity of Jesus. Does it teach that doctrine? Is it intended to teach it? Did the sacred writer mean in that passage to present Jesus as the Supreme God? How can he mean this, when he has expressly told us, near the conclusion of his gospel, chap. xx. 31, that it was written that its readers "might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God?" Can we believe that a passage at the commencement of St. John's gospel, is designed to prove that Jesus is God himself, when St. John informs us that he wrote to prove that Jesus is *the Son of God?* We take it for granted that a writer, at any rate that an inspired writer, knows what his design is in writing. We take it for granted, also, that when such a writer explicitly informs

us what that design is, when, in other words, he gives us the key by which to interpret his writings, we are bound to use that key. Using that key, we say that that introductory passage does not teach, that it is not intended to teach, the Deity of Jesus, unless it be one and the same thing to prove a person to be God, and to be God's Son, a proposition which is not only self-contradictory, but which stands in direct opposition to the Saviour's declaration, that the Father is the only true God. When, then, St. John declares that "in the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God;" and that "the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us," we know what his general, all-comprehending purpose was; for he has told us, viz: to present the divine Sonship of Jesus. What the special signification of each expression is, in view of the great variety of explanations which have been given, we cannot say with equal confidence, but in all probability we have a clue to the exact meaning in our Saviour's reply to Philip—John's gospel, chapter xiv. 9, 10. Philip had said, 'Lord, shew us the Father, and it sufficeth us.' "Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou

not known me, Philip? He that hath seen me, hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou, then, shew us the Father? Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? The words that I speak unto you, I speak not of myself: but the Father, that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works." This is a note-worthy passage. The declaration, "he that hath seen me hath seen the Father," literally taken would present Jesus, the Son, as the Father—a view which no Christians hold, except those who adopt the Swedenborgian view. The explanation of that declaration our Saviour has kindly and thoughtfully given; "*the words that I speak unto you, I speak not of myself, but the Father, that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works*" —i. e., the words that I speak are prompted by the divine wisdom and the deeds that I perform are done by the divine power dwelling in me. It is this divine power and wisdom—the power and wisdom of God—which St. John presents under the term "ὁ λογος"—"the Word," which, he says, was in the beginning with God, which was never separate from him, which was the source of life and light, which from the beginning has been revealing itself, but which did not

make a full revelation of itself until it was manifested in a human form, and thus drew near to men and dwelt among them in all its divine grace and truth. And thus this passage presents a striking and beautiful illustration of the truth, inestimably precious to all Christian hearts, of the divine Sonship of Jesus; that through the indwelling presence—power and wisdom of God—he, the Son, is a full revelation, a complete manifestation, of the Father.

Another passage confidently adduced in proof of the Deity of Jesus, is found in the epistle to the Romans, ninth chapter, fifth verse. "Whose are the fathers, and of whom, as concerning the flesh, Christ came, who is over all God blessed for ever. Amen." This passage the reviewer seems to regard as absolutely conclusive in proof that Jesus is God, and declares that "in vain will other constructions be put upon this verse."

Well, if this be so—if this passage cannot properly have any other construction and interpretation—then it teaches that Christ is "*the supreme God.*" This is what the reviewer expressly claims, page 66, that it does teach, and yet he has labored in his Review, from the twenty-second to the thirty-third page, to prove that

the church never held the doctrine that Jesus is the *supreme* God, but has always taught that "pre-eminence," "superiority," and, *a fortiori*, supremacy, belongs solely to God, the Father! If this be the case, then the church has been very untrue to the teachings of the great apostle to the Gentiles.

Again: If in this passage St. Paul teaches that Christ is the supreme God, then he teaches a doctrine very unlike that taught by him in the first epistle to the Corinthians; for in that epistle, as we have already seen, he explicitly teaches that the Father, and the Father only, is the supreme God. Nay, more; he teaches a doctrine in opposition to that of the Saviour, who declares that the Father is "the only true God." But no believer in the inspiration of St. Paul will suppose it possible for him to have contradicted himself upon a subject of deepest importance—much less for him to have spoken words at variance with the words of the Saviour.

One may, then, very pertinently ask, whether the construction put upon the passage by the reviewer is the only one which it will bear, and whether it is or not the proper construction? In reply, we give the words of one whose scholar-

ship we imagine the reviewer will not impugn—the distinguished Erasmus.

"This passage may be pointed and rendered in three different ways:—First, 'Of whom, according to the flesh, is Christ, who is over all. God be blessed forever.' Second, 'Of whom, according to the flesh, is Christ, who, being God over all, is blessed forever.' And, third, which is perfectly suitable to the purport of the discourse, 'Of whom is Christ according to the flesh;' finishing the sentence here and subjoining what follows—'God, who is over all, be blessed forever'—as an ascription of praise for our having received the law, the covenant, and the prophecies, and lastly Christ sent in human nature; privileges which God, by his unspeakable counsels, had bestowed for the redemption of mankind. . . . . Those, therefore, who contend that in this text Christ is clearly termed *God*, either place little confidence in other passages of Scripture,—deny all understanding to the Arians,—or pay scarcely any attention to the style of the apostle. A similar passage occurs in 2 Cor. xi. 31: 'The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, *who is blessed for ever;*' the latter clause being undeniably restricted to the Father. If,

however, the church teaches that Rom. ix. 5 must be interpreted of the Deity of the Son, the church must be obeyed; though this is not sufficient to convince heretics, or those who will listen only to the words of Sacred Writ: but if she were to say that that passage cannot be otherwise explained in conformity with the Greek, she would assert what is confuted by the thing itself."—(Erasmus: Annot. in Op., tom. 6. pp. 610, 611, quoted in Wilson's Concessions of Trinitarians, pp. 426, 427.)

The remarks of this great scholar in reference to another passage, may, with propriety, be quoted here. The passage is that found in Heb. i. 8: "Unto the Son he saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom." Of this passage the reviewer confidently says, "No other translation of this verse is for a moment admissible." Well, this language is certainly peremptory enough to be decisive. In its tone of authoritativeness it is worthy of any dignitary of Rome. But what says Erasmus? "It is uncertain which of the following renderings gives the true sense: 'Thy throne, O God! is for ever and ever' —'God himself is thy throne for ever and ever;'

for the Greek expression is ambiguous." Another translation, then, is admissible, notwithstanding the very positive and authoritative language of the reviewer—a translation which, in the opinion of the ablest scholars that the world has known, is equally faithful to the original, and which has the great advantage of being in perfect harmony with the declarations of the subsequent passage—"thou hast loved righteousness, and hated iniquity; therefore God, *even* thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows." Is it credible that such declarations as these can be made by a sacred writer in reference to the Supreme Being? Has the Supreme Being a God superior to himself, by whom he is anointed with the oil of gladness above his fellows? *His fellows!* Fellows of the Supreme—of Him who is infinitely exalted above all beings! Here certainly is a startling and painful incongruity—an incongruity which all thoughtful minds perceive, and to remove which the reviewer and all who take the same position with him are obliged to resort to the hypothesis of a double nature in Christ, by virtue of which "in the same sentence he could with propriety speak of himself as human and

divine,"—a hypothesis rendered necessary by the exigencies of a theology that pronounces Jesus God in spite of his own explicit declaration that "the Father is the only true God"—a hypothesis which does not remove the difficulties which it is employed to remove, but only hides them from sight by covering them with mystery; and which throws doubt and confusion over the teachings of him who always presented the truth with divine singleness and transparency, as became the herald of truth and the Son of the God of truth.

Another passage adduced by the reviewer in support of the doctrine of the Deity of Christ, is that found in the first epistle of St. John, chap. v., verse 20: "And we know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know him that is true: and we are in him that is true, *even* in his Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God and eternal life." The reviewer argues that "the last clause of this verse refers naturally to its immediate antecedent 'Jesus Christ,'—that the adjective true is twice before applied to him in the same verse with 'him that is true,' 'in him that is true,' 'the true God'—and that the predicate 'eternal

life' is in St. John's writings constantly applied to Christ, and *never* to the Father—and that therefore Jesus is in this passage called the true God and eternal life." In reply to this argument, we will give a brief but comprehensive statement and lucid exposition from the pen of one whose orthodoxy and whose learning the reviewer will not doubt—Grotius. "*This is the true God;* namely, He, and none else, whom Jesus hath declared to be the object of worship. The pronoun οὗτος, this, not unfrequently relates to a remote antecedent; as in Acts vii. 19; x. 6.

"*And eternal life:* this is said by metonymy. The apostle means, that God is the primary and chief Author of eternal life. So also Christ is called *life*, John xi. 25; xiv. 6; because, next to God the Father, he is the cause of eternal life."—(Annotationes ad Vetus et Novum Testamentum, quoted by Wilson, p. 566.)

Lücke, the distinguished German scholar, in his Commentary on the Epistles of John, (Wilson, p. 568,) after giving a similar exposition, says: "The meaning of the entire proposition is—This is the only *true God*, and in this only (in the knowledge of him, and in the communion with him through the Son) consists *eternal life.*"

Such is the explanation given by a distinguished Trinitarian scholar, and if any thing additional to its intrinsic credibility were needed to convince us that this is the true explanation, it may be found in the fact that St. John, the writer of the epistle, was the same who wrote the gospel, in which is recorded the declaration of our Saviour, xvii. 3, "this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent." Is it to be supposed that he, who in the gospel declares on the authority of Christ that *the Father is the only true God*, will declare in his epistle that the Son of God is the true God?

Another passage adduced in proof of the Deity of Christ is that found in Colossians i. 16, 17. "For by him were all things created, that are in heaven and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him: and he is before all things, and by him all things consist." Of this text the reviewer remarks, p. 69, with his usual and characteristic positiveness, "the application of it to a moral creation is too far-fetched to admit of argument." *Too far-fetched to admit of*

argument! Strong language this, and very convenient language is it to employ, for it decides the whole matter at once. But let us see how the language of the reviewer comports with the language of another Trinitarian writer, whose biblical learning is certainly sufficient to entitle his opinions to respect. Dr. Bloomfield, in his "Critical Digest of the most important Annotations on the New Testament," says, "the later commentators, and especially the recent ones, take the passage to refer to the new and spiritual creation by Jesus Christ, which, they maintain, is quite correspondent to the context and the phraseology of many parallel passages, as Eph. i. 10, 11; ii. 10–15; iii. 9, 10; iv. 22–24; Col. iii. 10, 11, &c. They particularly dwell on the similarity of style and subject matter in this and the twin Epistle (to the Ephesians) from which it appears that, by the revelation of the plan of redemption in the gospel, the angelic creation became enlightened as well as subject to Christ. This interpretation has been supported by all the acuteness and erudition which the recent foreign school could bestow upon it, especially by Ernesti, Justinus, Grulich, Noesselt, and Heinrichs. There is much to counten-

ance the opinion; insomuch that even some very orthodox divines seem inclined to adopt it." It is certainly very much to be regretted, that some *very orthodox divines* should seem inclined to adopt a mode of interpretation, which the reviewer pronounces so far fetched *as not to admit of argument!* Such an unfortunate inclination would appear well-fitted to bring discredit upon their good sense, if not upon their orthodoxy. We, heretics, cannot, of course, be expected to see and fully appreciate the worthlessness and utter inapplicability of a mode of interpretation, which has so much to countenance it, that even some very orthodox divines seem inclined to adopt it.

But, admitting, for the sake of argument, that the creation spoken of in this passage, is not the "new and spiritual," but the physical creation, does it thence follow that the passage was intended to teach, and that it necessarily does teach, that Jesus was the infinite Jehovah, the Supreme God? May he not have been God's agent in creation, without being himself the original, self-existent Creator? Does not St. Paul, the writer of this epistle, speak in the most unambiguous and explicit terms in his epis-

tle to the Ephesians, iii. 9, of "God, *who created all things by Jesus Christ*?"

Very appropriate in this connection, as well as admirable in themselves, are the remarks of a Trinitarian writer of excellent intellect and heart, Rev. George Hill, Principal of St. Mary's College, St. Andrews. In his "Lectures in Divinity," pp. 402, 3, he says, "We have no means of judging whether this power—the creative power—must be exerted immediately by God, or whether it may be delegated by him to a creature. It is certain that God has no need of any minister to fulfil his pleasure. He may do by himself every thing that is done throughout the universe. Yet we see that in the ordinary course of providence he withdraws himself, and employs the ministry of other beings; and we believe that, at the first appearance of the gospel, men were enabled, by the divine power residing in them to perform miracles, i. e. such works as man cannot do, to cure the most inveterate diseases by a word, without any application of human art, and to raise the dead. Although none of these acts imply a power equal to creation, yet as all of them imply a power more than human, [we place the remainder

of this thought-laden, and thought-awakening sentence, in Italics,] *they destroy the general principle of that argument upon which creation is made an unequivocal proof of Deity in him who creates.* And it becomes a very uncertain conjecture, whether reasons perfectly unknown to us might not induce the Almighty to exert, by the ministry of a creature, powers exceeding in any given degree those by which the apostles of Jesus raised the dead." Thus wrote one who firmly believed in the Deity of Jesus.

If, then, the passage in the Colossians were admitted to refer to the physical creation, it would by no means follow that it represents, or is intended to represent, Jesus as the self-existent Creator, the infinite Jehovah.

And when we look at the context, we see, as in the brightness of noonday—so, at least, it seems to us—that the passage could never have been intended, by the sacred writer, thus to represent Jesus. Let the reader observe in what terms he is spoken of. In the 13th verse, as God's "dear Son." In the 14th verse, as "the image of the invisible God, *the first born of every creature.*" Are such terms as these applicable to the eternal Jehovah—the Father—the

only true God? Is he his only Son? is he his own image? is he, the uncreated one, the first born of every creature? If they are not applicable, then the passage, whatever be its interpretation, does not prove the Deity of Jesus, but very distinctly proves his dependence upon God—his Sonship. In other words, this passage, in entire harmony with the express words of the Saviour, presents the Father as the only true God, and Jesus as his Son.

It is unnecessary to continue our examination of the passages which are considered Trinitarian proof-texts. Enough has been said to show that they are all capable of being interpreted, and that they all should be interpreted so as to harmonize with the great fundamental doctrine expressly taught by the Saviour, that the Father is the only true God, and that he is himself the Son of God.

And, here, it is not inappropriate to allude to the fact, which has often been presented and commented on, that there is scarcely one, if indeed one, of those proof-texts, which has not been interpreted by some one or other Trinitarian writer, in entire accordance with the Unitarian exposition. This fact certainly possesses much

interest, and no little weight. But whatever importance may be attached to this fact, the other fact must be regarded by all as of supreme importance—that the doctrine of the sole deity of the Father and of the Sonship of Jesus is given to us on the highest authority, and in the most decisive terms. The amount and strength of the Scripture testimony in behalf of this doctrine are indicated in the following condensed and comprehensive statement in "The Unitarian's Answer," by Dr. Dewey. "There are seventeen passages in the New Testament in which the Father is styled one or only God. There are three hundred and twenty passages in which he is styled God absolutely and by way of eminence. There are ninety passages in which it is declared that *all prayers and praises* ought to be offered to Him. There are above three hundred passages in which the Son is declared positively, or by the clearest implication, to be subordinate to the Father, deriving his being from Him and receiving from him his divine power. Of thirteen hundred passages in the New Testament, wherein the word God is mentioned, not one of them necessarily implies a plurality of persons; while

in the Old Testament there are about *two thousand* passages in which the unity of God is either positively expressed or clearly implied."

Such evidence seems to us clear, strong, and decisive. It places the doctrine of the unity, the supremacy, the sole Deity of the Father on immutable and everlasting foundations.

This doctrine was firmly held, as we believe, by the earliest Christians, though the reviewer has endeavored to prove that from the beginning the church believed and professed the doctrine of the Deity of Christ. We will make a few quotations from some of the Fathers to illustrate the views held by them. No Unitarian, who has any acquaintance, even the slightest, with the writings of these early Christians, will deny, or wish to deny, that lofty terms are applied by them to our Saviour. Some do not hesitate to apply the name 'God' unto him. This is cheerfully admitted. But in what sense was the name 'God' employed by them, when they attributed it to Christ? Did they use it as Christians now would use it? Did they use it in its proper, its legitimate, sense, as denoting the self-existent, eternal, and infinite Jehovah—the only true God? If they did, then, of course, in ap-

plying the name 'God' to Jesus, they very clearly indicated their belief in his Deity, in the full meaning of that term. But if they used it in some other sense, and did not mean by it to denote the self-existent, eternal, and infinite Jehovah, then, of course, their use of it, whether frequent or infrequent, does not prove their belief in the Deity of Jesus. How, then, did they use the term? Let the following quotations answer.

Justin Martyr, who wrote about the year A. D. 140, says "that Jesus was subordinate to the Father and minister to his will; and that *the Father is the author to him both of his existence, and of his being powerful, and of his being Lord and God.*"—(Dial. with Trypho., p. 413.) Here we have the express assertion of Justin, that Jesus received from the Father not only his lofty titles and divine power, but his *very existence!* Surely, then, he did not regard Jesus as the self-existent and true God.

Irenæus, bishop of Lyons, in Gaul, A. D. 180, is quoted by the reviewer in proof of the belief of the early Christians in the Deity of Jesus. Let the reader consider the statements made in the following quotations, and then say whether

he thinks it probable that Irenæus regarded Jesus as "God," in the strict legitimate sense of the term. "Our Lord himself, the Son of God, acknowledged that the Father *only* knew the day of judgment:"—"Since our Lord is the only teacher of truth, we should learn of him, that the Father is above all, for the Father, saith he, is greater than I. The Father, therefore, is by our Lord declared to be superior even in knowledge, to this end, that we, while we continue in this world, may learn to confess God only to have perfect knowledge, and resign such questions to him:"—"We hold fast the rule of truth which is, that there is one God Almighty, who created all things *through his Word:*"—"This God is the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, and of Him it is that Paul declared, there is one God, the Father, who is above all, and through all, and in us all." These quotations are taken from the first and second books of Irenæus against Heresies, and may be found on the 29th and 30th pages of "Forrest on the Trinity." Can any one, after reading passages like these, in which the writer plainly asserts that omniscience and omnipotence are not the attributes of Christ, believe that Irenæus regarded Christ

as God in the strict, legitimate sense of that term? Are not omniscience and omnipotence essential attributes of Deity?

Tertullian, born about A. D. 160, is another writer whom the reviewer has adduced as affording proof that the primitive Christians believed in the Deity of Christ. Two quotations will suffice to show whether or not he regarded Christ as "God," in the full significance of that term. In answer to the charge that he had taught doctrines inconsistent with the Supremacy or Monarchy of God, he says—"But I, who derive the Son from no other original than the substance of the Father, supposing him to do nothing but by the will of the Father, and to have received all his power from the Father, how is it that I destroy the belief of the Monarchy which I preserve in the Son, being delivered by the Father to him?" Again he says, "The Son always appeared, and the Son always acted, by the authority and will of the Father; because the Son can do nothing of himself but what he seeth the Father do." These quotations very clearly indicate that however highly exalted Tertullian may have regarded Jesus, both in nature and position, he was far from regarding him as "the

Supreme God," for surely a being who received all his power from the Father, cannot have possessed all power inherently; and all-power, omnipotence, certainly is an inherent attribute of the Deity.

There is another statement made by this writer, well worthy of notice, and which is as follows. (The quotation is taken from Clarke's Scripture Doctrine of the Trinity, London ed., p. 126.) Tertullian, in common with some other Christian philosophers, in their endeavors to refine upon the teachings of Christianity, had abandoned somewhat the simplicity and transparency so characteristic of the sacred writers, and had employed new terms—terms suggested by a speculative philosophy—which were regarded with distrust by plain, unlettered believers. He says, "the unlearned people, who are always the greatest part of believers, not understanding that they ought indeed to believe in one God, but yet so as at the same time to take in the economy, are frightened at the notion of the economy, and pretending that we teach two or three Gods, but that they are worshipers of the One God, perpetually cry out, 'we hold fast the monarchy;'" (i. e., the supremacy of the One God.) This

language is very definite and very significant. It shows that so deep-seated and strong was the attachment of the early Christians to the doctrine of the unity and supremacy of God—such their conviction of the importance of this doctrine, that they regarded with alarm and rejected with aversion terms, which seemed to them at variance with this fundamental doctrine. What clearer indication could we have—what stronger proof, of the jealous tenacity with which the great mass of Christians clung to the sole Deity of Him whom our Saviour declared to be 'the only true God.'

Another early writer, quoted by the reviewer to prove that the church has always believed in the Deity of Christ, is Origen, born at Alexandria, about A. D. 185. We rejoice that the reviewer has brought forward this eminent father and has spoken of him in terms which show that any statement made by Origen possesses great weight. He speaks of him "as generally acknowledged the first biblical scholar of his age." Origen, then, in the reviewer's opinion, is an unexceptionable witness. As such, we cheerfully, gladly, accept him. We ask for no better; and upon the statement of this very witness, intro-

duced and endorsed by the reviewer, this truly accomplished writer and devout Christian, we are willing to rest the whole case as to the belief of the primitive church in regard to the Deity of Christ.

What, then, are his statements? Here is one of them. First. If the reader will turn to Clarke's Scripture Doctrine of the Trinity, p. 149, he will find the following declaration. "Be it so that some among us are so rash as to imagine our Saviour to be himself the Supreme God over all; yet *we* do not so, who believe his own words 'my Father is greater than I.'" No one, certainly, can regard this language as ambiguous. Here we have an explicit declaration by Origen that in his time *some*, i. e. a few persons only, *were so rash* as to call Jesus the Supreme God.

In perfect harmony with this statement is the exposition of Origen's views, given by the distinguished historian Neander, a portion of which exposition, found in the first volume of his history, pp. 590, 591, we here present. "In conformity with this development of ideas, Origen held it to be quite necessary to insist on the absolute exaltation and superiority of God the Father, so far as his essence is concerned, above

every other existence; just as he was accustomed, when a Platonist, to consider the highest ὄν or 'being' as immeasurably superior to all other things, and exalted, in its essence, even above the νοῦς or 'intelligence' itself. It appeared to him therefore, something like a profanation of the first and supreme essence, to suppose an equality of essence or a unity between him and any other being whatever, not excepting even the Son of God. As the Son of God and the Holy Spirit are incomparably exalted above all other existences, even in the highest ranks of the spiritual world, so high and yet higher is the Father exalted even above them. . . . From this doctrine he drew the practical inference that we are bound to pray to the Father alone, and not to the Son." Neander, then, after going on to show that Christ was still to Origen the way, the truth and the life, continues his exposition as follows: "He, Origen, recognized him as the Mediator from whom alone Christians derive their communion with God; to whom they should constantly refer their Christian consciousness, and in whose name and through whom they should always pray to God the Father. He says, 'why may it not be expressed in the sense of

him who said, wherefore callest thou me good? There is none good but one, that is God. Why prayest thou to me? Thou shouldst pray to the Father alone, to whom I also pray. As you learn from the holy Scripture, you are not to pray *to* the High Priest ordained for you by the Father, *to* him who has received it from the Father to be your Advocate and Intercessor; but you must pray *through* the High Priest and the Intercessor, through him who can be touched with your infirmities, having been tempted in all points like as ye are, yet, by the gift of God, without sin. Learn, then, what a gift you have received from my Father, when, by your new birth in me, ye have received the spirit of adoption that ye might be called sons of God, and my own brethren.' "

Here, then, we have the explicit testimony of Origen, that in his day a few only had the rashness to imagine Jesus to be the Supreme God, and here we have the expression of his own belief that the Father, *even in essence,* is immeasurably superior to the Son, and that to the Father alone prayer is to be addressed.

If the reviewer regards this as orthodoxy, and he ought thus to regard it, for Origen is a witness whom he himself introduced to prove the

orthodoxy of the early Christians, then let him act consistently with this opinion. Let him cease praying to the Son of God, and let him cease from pronouncing his fellow Christians non-Christian, because, when they pray, they obey the Saviour's command, and say, "Our Father, who art in heaven."

Now we do not feel ourselves called upon to defend the philosophical and metaphysical system of Origen, for few Christians of the present day, of any denomination, would be willing to endorse all the speculative opinions of Origen, or any other of the early fathers; nor do we intend or wish to deny that he at times used the word 'God' in application to Jesus; but this we say, that, with Origen's clear and full explanation of his views before us, we know that he used the word in altogether a subordinate and secondary sense; he himself having explained what that sense was when he said, "*Jesus was a God, but not the self-existent God;*" and that he did *not* believe in the Deity of Jesus in any legitimate sense of the term. For what kind of Deity belongs to a being who is immeasurably inferior to the Supreme Being, and to whom even prayer is not to be addressed?

The evidence of Origen, then, is strong, decisive, as to his opinion in regard to the Deity of Jesus. That evidence is not only interesting in itself, as the evidence of one whom the reviewer commends as being, by general consent, "the first biblical scholar of his age," but because in it we have a fair representation of the prevalent tone of thought and feeling among the early Christian fathers. They speak of Jesus Christ in most exalted terms; some even apply the title 'God' to him; but as their own definitions and explanations clearly show in an altogether secondary and subordinate sense, as denoting divinity, not deity, while the name in its full, legitimate, unqualified sense, they applied to the Father alone. Thus they unequivocally show their belief in the unity, the supremacy, *the sole Deity*, of the Father, and thus they testify that they understood the Scriptures as clearly teaching that the Father is the only true God, and that Jesus is the Son of God.

Very interesting, in this connection, is the following passage, taken from the Christian Examiner of July, 1836, as showing the views of one whom the reviewer has spoken of in terms of deservedly high commendation. "Professor Stu-

art has recently made some statements on this subject, which, coming from such a source, are worthy of notice. They occur in the articles on Schleiermacher, in the numbers of the Biblical Repository and Quarterly Observer for April and July, 1825. They are at variance with the Professor's former statements relating to the opinions of the early Fathers. He thinks them more accurate, as they are the result of a more intimate acquaintance with the writings of the Fathers. The views of the Nicene Fathers, he tells us, 'if he understands them, do really and effectually interfere with the true equality in substance, power and glory, of the three persons or distinctions in the Godhead.' The Son and Spirit, he says, according to them, are derived beings, and derivation implies inferiority. 'A derived God,' he says, 'cannot be a self-existent God.' The numerical identity of the Father and Son, he affirms, was not a doctrine of the ancient Fathers. 'Justin,' he observes, 'says in so many words that the λογος (Son) is different from the Father, and *another in number*.' In regard to the unity and distinction of the Father and Son, he says, 'the zeal of Origen led him to a theory in no important respect better than that of Arius.'

'Such was the case, too, with Eusebius, the historian, and Dionysius names the Son a *creation* and *work* of the Father.' The council of Nice, he says, according to Athanasius, 'did not mean to assert the *numerical* unity of the Godhead,' and much more to the same purpose. The result is, that the Fathers generally, before and at the council of Nice, asserted the Son to be inferior to the Father, and *numerically* a different being from him. So says Professor Stuart." We especially commend to the reviewer's attention the declaration that Origen, "generally acknowledged the first biblical scholar of the age," held a theory in no important respect better than that of Arius!

And now, in concluding our argument in regard to the Deity of Christ, we state that the *reviewer himself*, though he would withhold the Christian name from Unitarians, because they deny the Deity of Christ, *virtually admits* that Deity, in its *proper sense*, can be predicated *alone* of the Father, and thus *virtually denies* the applicability of the term, in its *proper sense*, to Christ.

We make this statement deliberately, and we can verify it.

How so? a reader may ask. Does not the reviewer, in portions of his essay, speak of Christ as the Supreme God—the God over all? Certainly he does. And do you say, notwithstanding, that he virtually admits that Deity, in its proper sense, cannot be predicated of Christ; in other words, that Christ is not the Supreme God —the God over all? We do. But how can he take these two positions without self-contradiction? It is not for us to harmonize his positions. We only state what those positions are. That he at one time represents Christ as "the Supreme God—the God over all," no reader of the Review will doubt, for the representation is made fully and without qualification. See page 66 of the Review. No more words are necessary on this point.

Now, if the reader will turn to the portion of the Review included between pages 22 and 34, to which we have already alluded, he will find a series of quotations from Bishop Pearson, and other writers, adduced to prove that the Christian church has always held to the *supremacy* of the Father, a supremacy not formal or nominal, but real; so real and positive that, according to the quotations, "the ancient doctors of the

church have not stuck to call the Father the origin, the cause, the author, the root, the fountain, and the head of the Son, or the whole Divinity." This language is very strong and significant. The Father, according to the ancient teachers, is *the origin, the cause, the author* of the Son—nay, he is the whole Divinity. Now, is it possible to use language which shall more clearly affirm that self-existence belongs to the Father alone; and that the existence of the Son is a caused, a derived existence? This is the very point to prove which the quotations are made by the reviewer, viz: that "the Father has a pre-eminence in that his nature is underived; in that he is the Father; that he sends the Son," &c. Self-existence, then, according to the authorities adduced by the reviewer, has never been attributed to Christ by the Christian church. And now we would ask how Deity can be predicated of a being to whom one of the essential, most characteristic and distinctive attributes of Deity is denied? How can a being be "the Supreme God," "the God over all," whose existence is confessedly a *derived* existence, of whom the Father is the origin, the author, the cause? Deity, we say it with all re-

spect, Deity shorn of the glorious attributes of Deity, is a mere shadow—it is not Deity at all; and to predicate such Deity of any being, is to use words without appreciable meaning. Hence it was that we stated, some pages back, that when the reviewer speaks of the Deity of Christ, he does not mean Deity, but something else; and hence it is that we now repeat,as fully proved, our statement that the reviewer virtually admits that Deity, in any proper sense of the term, can be predicated of the Father only; and that he virtually denies that it can, in any proper sense of the term, be predicated of Christ.

Thus, according to the reviewer, Christ is "the Supreme God," and Christ is not "the Supreme God." These are the positions assumed by him, positions which, if language means anything, are utterly irreconcilable; and assumed by one who sneers at Unitarians, because of "the difference of opinion, which," as he asserts, "every Unitarian holds from every other Unitarian upon a subject where the only *one* faith has been already appropriated and held by the church Catholic, since the Christian era." Such sneers,we would respectfully suggest, come with poor grace from one who, within the narrow compass of a little

book, differs widely, irreconcilably from himself.

We have now indicated, with sufficient clearness we trust, some of the reasons why Unitarians believe that "Deity" can with propriety be affirmed of the Father alone. All our reasons may be summed up and embraced in this one, that the Saviour has expressly taught us that the Father is "the only true God."

But while we maintain, with all earnestness, the doctrine of the unity, the supremacy, the sole Deity of the Father, as a plain and essential doctrine of revelation, we do not depreciate the Saviour, or withhold from him the honor which, as we understand them, the Scriptures—the sacred words of inspiration—require us to pay him, and which our hearts prompt us to pay with joy and gratitude. As the Report clearly shows, we regard him as holding a place subordinate only to that held by "his Father and our Father; his God and our God." The reviewer, alluding to the views which the Report represents Unitarians as holding, says, "Christ is every thing but God. His pre-existence, his divine mission, his procession, his exaltation, are treated in the most flattering terms imaginable. Compliments of every kind are showered upon him."—Re-

view, p. 43. *Flattering terms! Compliments* showered upon him! Such language is very painful to us. Too deep is our reverence for the Saviour, his pure, transparent spirit, his holy, heavenly character, to permit us even to think of *compliments* in connection with him, or to use any language in regard to him, but the language of simple truth. We confess that we were somewhat surprised that the reviewer's own reverence for Jesus, if not his sense of the courtesy due from one sincere Christian gentleman to another whom he had every reason to believe equally sincere with himself, did not prevent him from thus characterizing the terms, in which deep reverence, and heart-felt gratitude towards the Son of God, had found honest expression. But let that pass.

As the Report shows, we regard Jesus as *the Son of God* — a relation of deepest interest, of sublimest character, of unutterable importance. The depths of this relation, we do not pretend to fathom; its full significance, we do not profess to understand. Not to finite power, not to human intelligence, does it belong, to sound those depths, to exhaust that significance. As the more, in solemn silence of the mind, we me-

ditate upon the awe-inspiring word, 'God,' the vaster, the deeper, the more unutterable the thoughts it gives birth to; so with the name, 'Son of God.' It suggests an ineffable nearness in nature, office and character to God. The more we dwell upon it, the more we are enabled to enter into the meaning of that impressive declaration by our Saviour: "He that hath seen me, hath seen the Father." He becomes to us the living manifestation of the Father, the image of the invisible God, the word made flesh, and dwelling among us full of grace and of truth. And as we think of this wonderful being, at once Son of God and Son of Man, we have thoughts awakened, far transcending our feeble powers of expression, in regard to the union of the human and the divine; of the purification and glorification of humanity; and of the inflowing of the divine life into the world, which make Jesus not only teacher and example, but Mediator and Redeemer, through whom heaven and earth, God and man, are to be brought into living union. And when, moreover, we think of him as the being through whom God's Holy Spirit comes to comfort, sanctify, and bless, to be the life of the church and of the world, his religion becomes

a glorious, living reality, "whose essence," as an able writer has said, "consists not so much in the revelation of a new speculative theory or system of morality, as in the bestowment of a new divine life, fitted to penetrate and refine, from its inmost center, man's entire nature, with all its powers and capacities, and also to give a new direction to all human thought and action;" and all the truths presented in this holy religion, relative to the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, become to us of priceless value, true angel's food, heavenly manna to the soul.

In the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, as the Report states, we cordially believe; nor, although the reviewer endeavors to represent Unitarian baptism as "ludicrous," and ventures to pronounce the solemn commission of our Saviour to his apostles, to go out into the world, and baptize all nations, "absurd and blasphemous upon any other scheme than that of a Trinity," have we ever been able to see aught but solemnity in the rite, even when administered in a Unitarian Church; or to discern either absurdity or blasphemy in the earnest, sincere acknowledgment of the Fatherhood of God, of the divine

Sonship of Jesus, and of the reality, presence and power of the Holy Spirit.

"Absurd and blasphemous upon any other scheme than that of a Trinity!" Is the doctrine of the Trinity, then, so plain, obvious, and intelligible that it is necessary to save our Lord's words from becoming absurdity and blasphemy? Not so appears to have felt that earnest and devoted Christian, Dr. Watts, whose hymns, sung in thousands of churches and myriads of Christian homes, "keep company with the hours" and circle the earth with nobler strains than the martial airs of England, when he penned his solemn Address to the Deity—an address well worthy of consideration by all the followers of Jesus, and especially by all who are ready, because of difference of opinion and interpretation, to deny the Christian name to believers as earnest, as sincere, and as capable of understanding the Scriptures as themselves—"Dear and blessed God! Hadst thou told me plainly in any single text that the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are three real, distinct persons in the divine nature, I had never suffered myself to be bewildered in so many doubts, nor embarrassed with so many strong fears of assenting to the mere inventions of men;

or hadst thou been pleased to express and include this proposition in the several scattered parts of thy book, from whence my reason and conscience might with ease find out and with certainty infer this doctrine, I should joyfully have employed all my reasoning powers with their utmost skill and activity, to have found out this inference and engraft it into my soul. And can this strange and perplexing notion of three persons going to make up one True God be so necessary and important a part of that Christian doctrine, which in the Old Testament and the New is represented as so plain and so easy, even to the meanest understanding?"—(Sparks' Inquiry, 386.) Such words, coming from the very depths of that large and pious heart, need no comment.

Let the reader compare them with the astounding assertion of the reviewer that the doctrine of the Trinity is found in the express language, as well as every where implied, of Holy Writ!—(Review, p. 110.) *Express language!* Strange is it that Dr. Watts could not find that language. Express language! And yet Bishop Smalridge declares: "It must be owned that the doctrine of the Trinity, as it is proposed in our Articles, our Liturgy, our Creeds, is not in so

many words taught us in the Holy Scriptures. What we profess in our prayers we nowhere read in Scripture, that the one God, the one Lord, is not one only person, but three persons in one substance."—(Sixty Sermons; Ser. 33, p. 348.) Express language! Where is that language? Let the Sacred Volume be searched from beginning to end, and it cannot be found.

It is not a pleasant thing to speak thus in regard to the statements of any man, much less of one whom we desire to regard as an earnest, sincere, and just man. But when a man asserts that a doctrine, which he pronounces essential, without belief in which a man cannot be a Christian, is found in the express language of Holy Writ, and thus endeavors to place those who do not believe in the doctrine, in the attitude of rejecting the plain, authoritative teachings of inspiration; when he represents men who differ from him in opinion as ceasing to hold to the "Head, even Christ," (Review, p. 10,) who do not cease to hold to Christ, but regard him with profound reverence and warm affection; when he intimates (Review, p. 20) that men "deny that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of the Father," who do not deny but rejoice in believing this great truth; when he designates an honest state-

ment of religious opinions as "gilded ashes," (Review, p. 13,) and endeavors, as far as his influence goes, to induce Christians to withhold the Christian name from men to whom the name of Christ is unutterably dear (Review, p. 94); when he accuses a truth-loving man of caricaturing the doctrines of Calvinism, when that man quotes the very language of the Westminster Confession, and exhibits in plain terms, without overstatement or understatement, a doctrine which every reader of that standard of Calvinism knows is taught in it; when he misrepresents the frankly spoken and intelligible words, in which an earnest heart has expressed its warm feelings, and says that believers in "Unitarian Views" give an invitation which "only repeats, in different language, the glozed untruth of the first tempter to the first man, which, for six thousand years, has sounded in the hearts of the self-deceived and the boaster, *Ye shall not surely die, but ye shall be as Gods, knowing Good from Evil* (Review, p. 155); when this is done, justice to ourselves and to the truths which we cherish, compels us to speak plainly, and to pronounce such assertions unjust, ungenerous, and untrue—not, we sincerely hope, in intention, but in reality, untrue.

"Absurd and blasphemous upon any other

scheme than that of a Trinity"! Is the doctrine of the Trinity, then, so evidently a doctrine of Scripture—so fundamental and essential—that without belief in it one cannot be a Christian? Not so thought that accomplished man, Bishop Watson, when he declared (Life, vol. 1, pp. 75, 76) "if any one thinks that a Unitarian is not a Christian, I plainly say, without being a Unitarian myself, that I think otherwise." Not so thought that eminent scholar, Dr. Parr, when, alluding to a prominent Unitarian, he said, "I shall ever think and speak of Mr. Wakefield as a very profound scholar, as a most honest man, and as a Christian who united knowledge with zeal, piety with benevolence, and the deep simplicity of a child with the fortitude of a martyr." Or when again he said, "without professing any partiality for Unitarians, I hold that they who acknowledge Jesus Christ to be the promised Messiah, to have had a direct and special commission from the Almighty, to have been endowed supernaturally with the Holy Spirit, to have worked miracles, and on the third day to have risen from the dead, —yes, my Lord, I hold that men thus believing, have a sacred claim to be called Christians."—(Works, vol. 1, p. 402; vol. 7, pp. 9, 10.)

These quotations, as well as the preceding

one and the one which we are next to give, can be found in Wilson's Concessions, pp. 8, 9, and 10.

Not so thought Dr. Doddridge, as Dr. Kippis clearly shows, when he writes as follows in the Biographia Britannica, vol. 5, p. 307: "Once I remember some narrow-minded people of his congregation gave him no small trouble on account of a gentleman in communion with the church, who was a professed Arian and who otherwise dissented from the common standard of orthodoxy. This gentleman they wished either to be excluded from the ordinance of the Lord's Supper, or to have his attendance upon it prevented; but the doctor declared he would sacrifice his place and even his life, rather than fix any such mark of discouragement upon one who, whatever his doctrinal sentiments were, appeared to be a true Christian."

Not so thought that extraordinary man, in whom there was so rare a combination of ardent piety and profound practical wisdom, John Wesley, when he said: "We may die without the knowledge of many truths, and yet be carried into Abraham's bosom; but if we die without love, what will knowledge avail? I will not quarrel with you about any opinion; only see that your heart be right towards God, that you

know and love the Lord Jesus, that you love your neighbor and walk as your Master walked, and I desire no more. I am sick of opinions. Give me solid and substantial religion; give me an humble, gentle lover of God and men; let my soul be with these Christians, wheresoever they are and whatsoever opinion they are of." His fidelity to these noble views Wesley showed in deeds as well as in words. He published the memoir of a Unitarian, and he prefaced the memoir with these words: "I was exceedingly struck at reading the following life, having long settled it in my mind that the entertaining wrong notions concerning the Trinity was inconsistent with real piety. But I dare not argue against *matters of fact;* I dare not deny that Mr. Firmin was a pious man, although his notions of the Trinity were quite erroneous."

Equally broad and noble are the views of Charles Wesley, and the saintly Fletcher. Delightful is it to ascend, with such men, from the low, dark, damp valleys of sectarianism, to the high, broad table-land, where Christian truth can be seen in its comprehensiveness; and where the soul can inhale the pure air of Christian charity. On that table-land, we find the men who, in every portion of the Christian church,

by largeness of mind, by fervent piety and holiness of life, have most impressively and beautifully illustrated the power of the religion of Jesus, to enlighten, to sanctify and bless. There we find Fenelon, Jeremy Taylor, Leighton, Chillingworth, Baxter, Robert Hall, men who loved the forms under which they worshiped God, and who were decided in their religious opinions; but who could see that there was a Christianity underlying all forms and opinions, on which all earnest and sincere followers of Jesus, and lovers of God, could stand and adore. To persons of a different class, both in mind and heart, must we turn to find illustrations of the spirit, which, because of differences in opinion and interpretation, denies the Christian name, and the enjoyment of Christian ordinances and privileges, to men, who reverently study the Scriptures, who love the Saviour, and endeavor to walk faithfully in the path of duty which he has marked out.

To one other eminent Christian we now turn for illustration of the point before us, the gifted and beloved Neander, to whose words we invite special attention. Neander believed in the doctrine of the Trinity, which he thus defines: "It is this doctrine, by which God becomes known as the original Fountain of all existence; as he,

by whom the rational creation, that had become estranged from him, is brought back to the fellowship with him; and as he in the fellowship with whom it from thenceforth subsists;—the threefold relation in which God stands to mankind, as primal ground, mediator and end—Creator, Redeemer and Sanctifier; in which threefold relation, the whole Christian knowledge of God, is completely announced." We do not know whether the reviewer would consider the doctrine, thus defined, as quite up to the mark; but we take it for granted, that neither he, nor any other champion of orthodoxy, will class that great and good man with proscribed heretics. Neander, then, was a firm, conscientious believer in the doctrine of the Trinity. Did he regard it as so essential, that, without it, the Saviour's commission becomes *absurd and blasphemous?* Let the reader judge. Here are his words, extracted from the first volume of his History of the Christian Religion and Church, page 572: "This doctrine does not strictly belong to the fundamental articles of the Christian faith, as appears sufficiently evident from the fact that it is expressly held forth in no one particular passage of the New Testament; for the only one in which this is done, the passage relating to the three that bear record

(1 John v. 7) is undoubtedly spurious; and in its ungenuine shape, testifies to the fact how foreign such a collocation is from the style of the New Testament Scriptures. We find in the New Testament no other fundamental article besides that of which the Apostle Paul says, that other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, the annunciation of Jesus as the Messiah; and Christ himself designates as the foundation of his religion, the faith in the only true God, and in Jesus Christ, whom he hath sent.—John xvii. 3."

This strong and positive statement we commend to the attention of all thoughtful Christians, not only because it presents a full and satisfactory reply to those who would make belief in the doctrine of the Trinity, a test for admission to the table of our Lord, and a condition for assigning the Christian name, but, also and especially, because it so clearly shows the foundation on which the church stands. *Faith in the only true God, and in Jesus Christ, whom he hath sent.* This faith the church has a right to require in those who seek admission; for this was required by Christ and his apostles. More than this, it has no right to demand; and if it does demand more than this as a condition of Christian fellowship, we say, as we have said be-

fore, it is guilty of usurpation and tyranny. It has no right to make belief in the Trinity, or assent to the Nicene, Athanasian, or any other creed, or compliance with any particular forms which it may prescribe—a condition of admission to the communion table, or of receiving the Christian name. If a man has faith in God and his Son, it is not, we repeat, for the church to decide whether or not he is entitled to the name. That question, Christ has already decided; and if any church withholds the name, it places itself in opposition to Christ, it virtually rebels against and renounces his authority. The man may be Arian, Trinitarian, or Humanitarian; he may be correct or incorrect in his philosophical and metaphysical views, but, whether correct or incorrect in them, if he have faith in God, and in Jesus, as his Son, as the Messiah, he is entitled to claim the name dear to all Christian hearts, and to claim it not as a favor, but as a *right*.

Men and churches, arrogating orthodoxy to themselves, may fancy themselves authorised to sit in judgment upon Unitarians and other Christians whom they designate as heretics, to debar them from the table of our Lord, to shut them out from Christian Associations; but whenever and wherever they do these things,

we charge them not only with violating the spirit of Christian courtesy, but with assuming and exercising an authority which does not belong to them, and thereby setting at nought the authority of Christ and of God. Jesus accused the Pharisees of old, of making the word of God of none effect through their traditions. Modern Pharisaism does the same thing. The word of God, uttered through his Son, is, that faith in him and his Son, is the grand, essential, fundamental thing. No, says modern Pharisaism, belief in my creeds, my forms, my dogmas, is the essential thing, without which, though your heart overflows with love for God and his Christ, you shall not wear the name of disciple; you shall not approach the communion table; and, as far as rests with me, you shall not share in the bliss of the redeemed in heaven.

This is modern Pharisaism, which a few ages back brought the horrid enginery of the inquisition to bear against those whom it was pleased to denominate heretics, but which now, restrained by the spirit of the age, or rather by the spirit of genuine Christianity, which more and more pervades society, can only show itself in acts and words which at once reveal its littleness and its impotency.

Modern Pharisaism! Once, armed with the power of the state, able to lay nations under its terrible interdict, and manifest its reality in sword and flame, it had an awful dignity; but now, poor thing! it has lost much of its respectability, and is tottering towards its grave. Let it die, and be buried. None will mourn its dissolution except such, if any such there shall then be, as desire some other foundation of the Christian church than that which God, through Christ, hath laid.

Faith in God and Jesus Christ, his Son! It is this which has made the church a living church in all ages; it is this which has caused whatever real union the church has enjoyed; and it is this which will produce that genuine union, which eventually the church will rejoice in; that unity of the spirit in the bond of peace, which will be the fulfillment of the Saviour's promise and God's answer to his earnest prayer. As we recall the history of the Christian church, what names stand out as gloriously illustrative of its blessedness and power? Such names as those of Justin Martyr, Origen, Chrysostom, Augustine, Luther, Pascal, Fenelon, Leighton, Jeremy Taylor, Baxter, Fox, Wm. Penn, Milton, Oberlin, John Howard, Cheverus, Felix Neff, Chalmers, Channing, Ware. Who will deny that these were Christian men? Who

doubts that they were welcomed to the heavenly home, or that they are now enjoying the bliss of the just made perfect in the realms of light? We feel, every Christian heart feels, that these are all one in Christ their head. But what makes them one? Not unity of form, for under every form did they worship God, from the gorgeous ceremonial of the cathedral to the severely simple service of the Quakers or Friends. Not similarity of opinion, for among them we find every variety of thought and speculation. Here are Protestants and Catholics, Trinitarians and Unitarians, believers in unending retribution and in final restoration, in Episcopacy and in independent Congregationalism. And yet we regard them all as Christians, all as united in Christ and his church.

What unites them? Faith in God and his Son; a living faith, that faith which works by love, and purifies the heart. This is their bond of union, their only bond, and an all-sufficient bond.

Let this faith be recognized as the true source, as the only means of union. As we believe that by this the departed are united in Christ, so let us believe that the living are united. Let all Christians be ready to admit, cheerfully, cordially, that faith in God and his Christ is the essential, the funda-

mental thing in the church, and that all, of whatever denomination, who possess this, are entitled to the Christian name. Then, instead of being so widely sundered, we shall in spirit be brought together. We shall learn of each other. We shall delight to have in our libraries and by our side the books in which the great thinkers and noble spirits, not only of our own denomination, but of all denominations, speak unto us, and, as we hold grateful and reverent communion with these truth-seeking and truth-illumined minds, we shall rejoice to feel and to acknowledge that no Christian, that no set of Christians, has monopolized God's truth. That truth is infinite. Some clearly discern one portion, some another. The great difficulty with us all is that, because of our isolation, we are apt to regard the segment which we severally see as the full circle of truth. Let us come together, join segment to segment, and then, though we may not be able to see the circle in all its symmetry and completeness, for the finite mind can never measure and comprehend infinity, our mental range will be widened, our vision will be purified; and, through the influence of God's Holy Spirit, we shall be prepared for that world of deeper thought, of wider knowledge, of warmer

love, where we shall see eye to eye and know as we are known.

Nor is it only as means of preparation for the love and harmony of the spiritual world, that faith—living, heart-felt faith—in God and Christ, and the union which springs from this faith, are to be earnestly desired, and to be valued as the crown-jewels of heaven. They are needed for this world, as well as for another. Society is Christian in name, but it is far from being Christian in reality. All around us are evils, vices, crimes, woes—dark blots upon our boasted Christian civilization, and terrible reproaches to it,—which demand removal. Vast and fearful social problems press upon us, and demand solution. But there will never be removal of the one, nor solution of the other, until the energies of all God-fearing and Christ-loving hearts are concentrated and brought to bear upon this great end. Too long have these energies been impaired by sectarian suspicion and wasted in sectarian war. There is a power, a vital, resistless power, in the church which it has never fully exerted, the possession and responsibilities of which it has never fully realized, because its members have not been heartily united. Let them be thus united, let there be the union which springs

from faith in God and Christ, genuine spiritual union, union of heart and purpose, the only union attainable or essential—for uniformity in opinion and ritual there never can be, while there are deep differences in mental power, education and taste—let there be heart-union, soul-union, and a power will be developed, a moral and spiritual force, of which Christians now scarcely dream. Constantly will that power increase, as faith deepens and strengthens, and to every emergency will it prove adequate. It will go on, conquering and to conquer, until the kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ. Then society will not merely be *called,* but it will *be* Christian.

In the accomplishment of this great work, we, Unitarian Christians, desire to do our part, humble it may be; and we shall rejoice to see all other Christians doing theirs. To all who have faith in God and Christ, whatever name they may bear, we bid a hearty God-speed. We rejoice, and always shall rejoice, at beholding and acknowledging Christian excellence wherever and by whomever manifested. True-hearted, devoted followers of Christ, we see in every denomination; men and women who, in public and private, at home and in foreign lands, by word and

deed, are illustrating the beauty and the holiness of the religion dear to us all. For such Christians, we render heartfelt thanks; and upon them, we pray that the blessing of Heaven may rest for ever and ever.

But while we shall always esteem it a delightful privilege, as well as a sacred duty, to see and acknowledge Christian worth, wherever manifested, and with whatever religious opinions it may be associated, we shall never, we trust, prove recreant or unfaithful to the views which a reverent study of the Bible reveals to us as true Scriptural views. While we shall aim, at all times, to do justice to other denominations, we shall always demand that justice be done to our own. We shall always protest, with plainness and solemnity, against the sectarianism and bigotry which would deny the Christian name to Unitarians. Unitarians not Christians! John Milton not a Christian! Destroy every copy of Paradise Lost; blot out every trace of it from the mind of man; bury in oblivion those majestic prose-poems in which that noble intellect, at the promptings of a heroic heart, pleaded the cause of liberty and humanity, and then let one, if he will, breathe forth that calumny—but not till then.

John Locke, the profound thinker, the friend of mental freedom, not a Christian! Sir Isaac Newton, who brought to the study of the volume of Revelation, the same transcendent intellect, the same child-like spirit, with which he had reverently sought to discover the laws written by the finger of God, in the volume of Nature—Sir Isaac Newton not a Christian!

No—according to the position taken by the reviewer, and by all who deny the Christian name to Unitarians, and, under the assumption of orthodoxy, advocate the unholy system of exclusion—these great and good men, whose memory is enshrined in all true hearts, were not Christians, because they were Unitarians. We thank God that they were Unitarians; not because our faith needs the sanction of great names—for it is content with the sanction of God's Word—but that the Christian world may understand the true nature of that system of proscription, which arrogates to itself the epithets, "orthodox" and "evangelical;" and which, to be consistent with itself, must sacrilegiously blot out such glorious stars as these from the Christian heaven. Against this exclusive, denunciatory system, we shall always utter our earnest and solemn protest. We shall al-

ways endeavor, with the blessing of God, to be faithful to the liberty wherewith the Son of God has made us free.

We have thus vindicated the doctrines which, as Unitarian Christians, we rejoice to hold—doctrines which seem to us plainly, explicitly taught in the Holy Scriptures—doctrines which did not require three or four centuries to pass before they could be fully developed and adequately expressed, but which were presented in fullness of development by the Saviour and his apostles, and which neither seek nor need any other medium of expression than the divinely rich and beautiful language of the Sacred Volume. To this volume we shall cling. With its expression of heavenly truth we shall remain content, notwithstanding the anxiety of the reviewer to have us pass "through the Scriptures to those very creeds which we have rashly discarded." We fear—we hope, rather,—that in this respect he is doomed to disappointment. Through the Scriptures to the creeds! It certainly is not our intention to turn to any cisterns which man has hewed—"broken cisterns that can hold no water"—while we have the heavenly fountain of living waters flowing fresh and free. We trust, moreover, that in time the reviewer and

those who agree with him in theological opinion, will go on with the good work, so auspiciously begun by the American Episcopal church when it set aside the Athanasian creed; that they will also set aside the Nicene creed, and change the Apostles' creed, so called, from the form in which it is now commonly used—a form which the translator of Mosheim says it attained in the Romish church—to the simpler and purer form in which it was used in the fourth century. Having gone thus far, we doubt not that they will gladly go one step farther, and cordially accept, in all its simplicity and all its comprehensiveness, the genuine Apostles' Confession of Faith, and make the Bible alone "their divinely-authorized standard both of faith and practice." Then all of them, having laid aside human creeds, will cast off forever, as many of them have already done, the spirit of illiberality and denunciation, and will rejoice in recognizing as fellow-Christians all who have faith in God and his well-beloved Son.

In hoping thus, the reviewer will think we hope against hope. To him an earnest, honest protest against creeds, as arbitrary standards of faith, and against the exclusive spirit which often accompanies them, is only ludicrous. The Report, published at the request of the Conference

of Western Unitarian Churches, "reminds him, irresistibly, of our naval hero, Paul Jones, with three little ships, putting Great Britain in a state of blockade." We accept the comparison, though intended in ridicule, and thank him for it. Paul Jones possessed an earnest, gallant spirit. He was ready to do what he could against the power which then stood forth as the deadly foe of American liberty. His three little ships, too, were the precursors of that glorious navy which afterwards carried the stars and stripes in triumph over all waters, and asserted and maintained the freedom of the ocean against her, who till then had claimed to be Mistress of the Seas. Few may Unitarians appear and small their resources. We may have three ships only with which to meet that power which, under the name of Orthodoxy, haughtily claims dominion to itself and denies the freedom of God's boundless ocean of truth. But those ships, we rejoice to know, belong to that navy which, through the united exertions of liberal-hearted Christians of every name, is daily increasing in power, and which yet is destined, with the blessing of Heaven, to vindicate the freedom of the seas, and cause the flag of Christian liberty to wave in glorious and eternal triumph.

NOTE.

BY THE WRITER OF THE REPORT.

I do not think of taking any notice of the many instances of personal allusion in the Review, except to say they are unusual, uncalled for, and unjust; and probably have proceeded from an idiosyncrasy of the author, which plainly appears in the Review. Self-sufficiency leads men, aware or unaware, into wrong to others in writing, as well as in other actions.

I have felt painful mortification at the disappointment. I had thought that, above all men, politeness, justice and kindness, were to be expected from one who fills the place of a minister, a servant of Christ.

When, however, he has not been content with unkindnesss, neglect of established decorum, and offensive insinuations, but has attempted to make me utter a belief which I have not uttered, not even intimated, it is due that I should speak for myself, and not let him put words in my mouth. His Review will be read, doubtless, by persons who will never see the Report; and the writer of it, whose views, to be sure, are not of much importance, will be supposed to have written what he did not write, and what he did not think.

I shall not attempt to correct all the perversions and garblings of the Review; but, standing as I do towards the Conference, the subject mentioned, pp. 144 and 145, is of too much importance to be allowed to pass without correction, as far as this note can have the effect.

I do not like to use some words that are in the preceding paragraphs, in reference to any one, and especially when I am speaking in connection with the solemn subject which immediately succeeds; but I cannot avoid this, unless I neglect the truth, and surrender myself to what another does.

1. He says, "Even the writer of this Report, who believes in a real expiation, does not think it was intended to affect God, though he reads, in his Bible, that 'God is angry with the wicked every day.' He believes in an expiation that has its beginning, middle and end in man—a real expiation, that has no reference to guilt or punishment." Now, surely this is not a fair statement, or anything like it. It would make those who have not seen the Report, not only misunderstand what it contained, but, indeed, think I had written down the absurdity which he endeavors to make me speak. I never said any such words, or uttered, in any form, such a sentiment as that I believed in an expiation that has its beginning, middle and end in man—a real expiation, that

has no reference to guilt or punishment. Why did he refrain from any allusion to these words, printed in italics, as they are here, to be found in the very section of the Report he was pretending to comment on?—"*But his death was necessary on account of our sins. And when we contemplate His sufferings, brought about by our transgressions, O, what can so powerfully impress us with the awfulness of sin!*"

I certainly did mean to be understood as believing that the expiation was not intended to render God placable by appeasing anger, or making a satisfaction to him, in any sense in which these expressions are understood as applying to men. There is no statement any where in the Scriptures that God was reconciled, or satisfied for a breach of his law, by the death of Christ. There are many figurative expressions, differing from one another, to be found, that would not controvert the position, but in a degree sustain it, *if we had seen the position stated;* but these figurative expressions do all correspond with another position, that seems to me to agree with the love, and justice, and mercy of our Father in Heaven, as revealed by Christ, while He cannot look upon sin with the least allowance. I think we are bound to believe, notwithstanding what we see of moral and physical evil in what is created, that the great Creator and Father of all is a per-

fectly good being—this is a matter of implicit faith and trust. We cannot, therefore, believe that this good Being is capable of revenge or cruelty, as we understand such words to mean in reference to men. We, then, should be inclined to interpret expressions which we find in the Bible, by this faith in his infinite goodness; and when we read such words as that "the Lord was wroth," "For a fire is kindled in mine anger, and shall burn unto the lowest hell, and shall consume the earth with her increase, and set on fire the foundations of the mountains," words spoken in reference to the rebellious Hebrews, Deut. xxxii. 22. [Compare the quotation of the reviewer, page 146, with the full and true text. The figure of speech is plain and necessary in the text.] "God is angry with the wicked;" "the wrath of God,"—we should remember that in the same book, we find it declared, He is "merciful and gracious, long-suffering and abundant in goodness;" that "His mercy endureth forever;" "God is love;" in short, that He is "our Father in heaven," which imports more than the kindness of an earthly parent's heart. The strong expressions that are used, such as 'wrath' and 'anger,' must be figurative of the great disapprobation God has of wickedness; of the enormity of sin; for we cannot imagine, even, that the Infinite Jehovah should be angry, fall into a

passion of wrath, as such words express the feeling of men. But formerly, literal anger was applied to God—and so it is now, by some men—and they seem to glory in the thought—just as it was believed the "lake of fire, burning with brimstone," was not to be taken as a figurative expression, but a real lake. And it was when such things as these were believed, men also believed that God would not pardon sin, on repentance and turning to him, without a satisfaction made him; and thus the doctrine must have got into the creeds. But those who believe in the absolute goodness of God, do not find that the Scriptures say so. They find that our Lord said, "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son; that whosoever believeth on him, should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world, to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be saved."—John iii. 16, 17. If the blood of Christ was "shed for many, for the remission of sins"—and so, surely, it was—(Matt. xxvi. 28) it was done by the *appointment* of God, out of love to men, and not to satisfy God, or appease him, or render him placable—not to affect him, for it was done in his own Providence. Remission of sins does not imply satisfaction rendered. The remission may be on other grounds. Satisfaction has not, necessarily, any connection with it—none at all.

The writer seems to think the word "expiation," must mean "satisfaction," or it means nothing; and we have no Saviour, if there is not a satisfaction. The original word, from which our word expiation is derived, meant, in its natural and primary sense, "*absolution*" or *purifying*. (Leverett.) The meaning quoted by the reviewer, from Webster, is secondary and defective. *Expio* means "to purge anything that has been polluted by crime or offense; to cleanse, purge, clear, restore to purity." (Leverett's Lexicon.) If Christ, out of God's mercy and love, took away the sin of the world, then there was an expiation, "not to affect God, but in his wise and incomprehensible Providence, to accomplish our salvation." That is the Scripture view, it seems to me, as shown by the writings of the Apostles. St. Paul, quoting from the Old Testament, in the eleventh chapter of Romans, says, "And so all Israel shall be saved, as it is written, There shall come out of Sion, the Deliverer, and shall take *away* ungodliness from Jacob: For this is my covenant unto them, when I shall *take away their sins*." In the ninth chapter of Hebrews, the author says, "For if the blood of bulls, and of goats, and the ashes of a heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh, How much more shall the blood of Christ, who, through the Eternal Spirit, offered himself

without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?" The author goes on in this chapter to show, further, that the sacrifices of the old law were meant for cleansing and purifying; and says, "almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without the shedding of blood is no remission." Now, by remission, (it is not said 'of sins,' as the reviewer adds to the text, p. 142,) here, he evidently means only the purification of the tabernacle, &c., and a ceremonial cleansing of the people; ("He sprinkled both the *book* and all the *people*," verse 19;) for, in the verse right before it, he says, "moreover, he," Moses, "sprinkled likewise with blood, both the tabernacle and all the vessels of the ministry." [The speaking in the present tense, "there *is* no remission," does not interfere with this view, for he speaks of the priests' administration under the old law, as if existing *now*, at the time he writes.]

He then again refers to the office of Christ, succeeding the old ceremonial, and says, "he appeared to *put away* sin by the sacrifice of himself." And this is exactly the sacrifice of expiation, but not satisfaction. And he goes on in the next chapter to speak on the same subject: After stating the insufficiency of the old sacrifice "to *take away* sins," and the coming of Christ to do the will of God, he says, "*By*

which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all. And every priest standeth daily ministering and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices which can never *take away sins*: but this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins, forever sat down on the right hand of God." This plainly means not to express a satisfaction to reconcile God, but purifying, restoring, *taking away sins.*

"Sprinkling," "blood of sprinkling," mean purifying, cleansing, restoring. In the twelfth chapter of Hebrews, after having spoken in the ninth, tenth and eleventh, of the sprinkling of blood in the purification of the tabernacle, &c.; and "having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience;" and how Moses "kept the passover, and the sprinkling of blood, lest he that destroyed the first born should touch them," the author says, "But ye are come to Mount Sion," &c. "and to Jesus the Mediator of the New Covenant, and to the *blood of sprinkling* that speaketh better things than that of Abel." St. Peter, in the first chapter of his first Epistle, says, "Elect, &c. through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and the *sprinkling* of the blood of Jesus Christ." St. John, who recorded the exclamation of John the Baptist, "Behold the Lamb of God which *taketh away* the sin of the world," says in the first chapter of his first

Epistle, "the blood of Jesus Christ this Son *cleanseth* us from all sin;" and in the third chapter, fifth verse, he says, "And ye know that he was manifested to *take away* our sins."

If all these expressions, from the declaration of our Lord himself, down to the last quotation, do not show that there was a sacrifice without a satisfaction to an angry God, as we mean by the word 'angry' as applied to men, then it must be because such a thing cannot be stated, or because they are overcome by passages that cannot be reconciled to these. It seems to me, when we can find no statement that there was a satisfaction to reconcile God, the other passages, in metaphorical language, that vary from each other, can be as well reconciled to these as to one another.

Those who hold to the sacrifice of expiation, all agree that the sacrifice of the law did prefigure the sacrifice of Christ. Archbishop Magee, a learned doctor in the reviewer's church, (with whose views I do not always agree) in his two Discourses on the Atonement, does not once use the word 'satisfaction;' and the notion of appeasing wrath in God, and rendering him placable, is entirely discarded. He says, "The sacrifice of Christ was never deemed by any, who do not wish to calumniate the doctrine of the atonement, to have made God placable; but merely viewed as the means, appointed by divine wisdom, through which to bestow forgiveness." And in the 2d Discourse he

says, "The offering up an animal cannot be imagined to have had any *intrinsic* efficacy in *procuring* pardon for the transgression of the offerer. The blood of bulls and goats could have possessed no virtue whereby to *cleanse* him from his offenses. Still less intelligible is the application of the blood of the victim to the *purifying* of the parts of the tabernacle, and the apparatus of the ceremonial worship. All this can clearly have had no other than an *instituted* meaning, and can be understood only as in reference to *some* blood-shedding, which, in an eminent degree, possessed the power of *purifying from pollution*." And, (I do not quote consecutively,) "That the sacrifices of the law should, therefore, have chiefly operated to the *cleansing* from external impurities, and to rendering *persons or things fit* to approach God in the exercises of the ceremonial worship—whilst, at the same time, they were designed to pre-figure the sacrifice of Christ, which was purely spiritual, and possessed the transcendant virtue of atoning for all *moral pollution*—involves no inconsistency whatever, since in this the true proportion of the entire dispensations is preserved." And, "Thus, when we find the virtue of atonement attributed to the sacrifice of Christ, in like manner as it had been to those under the law, by attending to the representations so minutely given of it in the latter, we are enabled to comprehend its true import in the former;" and he speaks again of the

sacrifice of Christ as in its effects similar to the sacrifice of the law; and of that he says, "the consequence of the whole being the *removal* of the punishment of these iniquities from the offerers, and the ablution [washing away] of all legal offensiveness in the sight of God—thus much of the nature of vicarious, the language of the Old Testament justifies us in attaching to the notion of atonement." *Magee on the Atonement, Appleton's Edition, pp.* 41, 63, 65, 67.

Why does not the reviewer accuse him of a denial of the atonement, as he does the Report in direct language? (pp. 14, 113.) But how dare any man say the atonement is denied by such as hold the views expressed in the Report, or as quoted from the Discourses! Is this man commissioned to speak for God, and to condemn all that do not yield to his speech and think as he thinks? Or is he left to stand like any man who may choose to say that other people deny what they do not deny, but firmly and reverently maintain?

How this taking away, restoring, purifying, occurred in God's providence, I do not know, I cannot pretend to understand; but I do not believe that Christ was only an "exemplar and martyr;" or that he came only to declare the true God; the Universal Father; (not a cold, uncareful, solitary divinity, but a near, affectionate Parent;) the enormity of sin; repentance and for-

giveness; love to God and men; immortal life; to be "God manifested in the flesh;" great, and beyond all human thought as such a mission must have been: But I believe in a sacrifice of atonement, of reconcilement of man to God, and an expiation of his sins.

The reviewer comprehends well how the "anger of God burns to the lowest hell" against sin, "and is not quenched but in the atoning blood of Christ," i. e., the blood of satisfaction. I believe that "sin is the abominable thing that God hateth," but I cannot comprehend how he can have wrath toward his feeble creature man, that can be only quenched in the blood of innocence, and not be cruel. Yet I would not say we have no Saviour, unless the position in this note be right: O no; no; I may be mistaken. I am a man, and cannot even sit in judgment on the faith of my fellow men; how can I decide on the economy, the providence of God? I must only come to the best conclusion I can, after careful study of his written word, and I must be cautious that no bias of education shall make me yield a fair judgment of the Sacred Scriptures to what has been written by fallible men like myself.

He says, (page 145,) the effect of the death of Christ upon man's salvation is very comprehensible; and I am reproached because I do not find it so. I had thought this was among the "things the

angels desire to look into" (1 Peter i. 12); and with reverence I would say with Archbishop Magee, when it is demanded, "In what way can the death of Christ, considered as a sacrifice of expiation, be conceived to operate to the remission of sins, unless by the appeasing of a Being, who otherwise would not have forgiven us?—To this the answer of the Christian is,—I know not, nor does it concern me to know, in what manner the sacrifice of Christ is connected with the forgiveness of sins; it is enough that this is declared by God to be the medium through which my salvation is effected. I pretend not to dive into the councils of the Almighty. I submit to his wisdom: and I will not reject his grace, because his mode of vouchsafing it is not within my comprehension." And, "a sacrifice for sin, in Scripture language, implies solely this,—a sacrifice wisely and *graciously appointed by God*, the moral governor of the world, to expiate the guilt of sin in such a manner as *to avert* the punishment of it from the offender." "To ask why God should have appointed this particular mode, or in what way it can avert the punishment of sin, is to take us back to the general point [at issue with the Deist, which has been already discussed.] With the Christian who admits redemption *under any modification*, such matters cannot be subjects of inquiry."—(Magee on the Atonement, pp. 42, 50.)

When Unitarians speak of God as the Father who does not exact a satisfaction from innocence to appease anger toward the guilty, some persons affect to think they do not acknowledge the enormity, the awfulness, of sin; and sometimes they remind them that God is a judge as well as a Father, and they talk of "judicial guilt." This is merely arbitrary—judicial, separate from any other guilt—a contrivance of man's ingenuity. God is the maker of all his children—"all souls are mine;" of his own government and laws; he sees through all, has care of all; knows all; knows when men repent and reform in their hearts, and yield to his law; he judges all as CAUSE and parent of all. He is never called to be a judge in another's kingdom, as an earthly judge, who is governed by laws made for him, or not under his control, or that have authority over him; or of another's subjects, to look after another's polity, and throw off his character of Omniscience, Creator, Father. His law is not a thing of policy, as among men, separate from himself, that *requires* him to demand a satisfaction, while in his mercy he would forgive the heart-penitent, as the father ran to meet the returning prodigal son.—(Luke 15.)

Men that make a conflict, a strife, between the attributes of mercy and justice in our heavenly Father, do bring him down to a level with themselves. His mercy is justice, and his justice is mercy.

I ask again, as was asked in the Report, what can be meant by satisfaction to God? Who can imagine such a thing to be made?—Satisfaction to God!

2. I feel bound to allude to another assertion in the Review. The author says: "Yet they are much offended if we will not denominate them a church—a church of Christ—and they have no confidence in the creeds of men."—(Page 144.) There is not one word about being denominated a church in the Report; and not a word about being offended, or any expression from which such an inference could be made. We did not say we had no confidence in the creeds of men; but at page 11 (see Report) these words will be found: "We do not withhold a suitable deference for the opinions of our fellow-men, in this day, or in former days. Regard for the belief of men, as some evidence of truth, is natural and proper; but it is often delusive, and a blind submission to it takes away all independent thought, and fixes a false basis of religious faith. *The opinion of millions cannot supersede the Scriptures.* We dare not yield them an instant to *succeeding millions.*"

I suppose that by "we," the writer of the Review does not really mean himself, although he tells us in his preface that he uses "we," meaning himself. But here, he, probably, only means the church to which he belongs. The Church of England we love and admire, (not any intoler-

ance into which improper men have led her,) but we have never asked whether it acknowledged the Unitarian church, or not, or denominated it a church of Christ. We have not been offended, or talked of being offended; nor have we heard a man or woman in the bounds of the Conference say one word on the subject of his church that was not kind and pleasant; and we venture to think a jeering fling from one of its ministers does not comport with a Sermon, better to be remembered, that blessed the meek, and not the supercilious.

He virtually says, by the effort to sneer at Christians who hold the sentiments expressed in the Report, that the church to which he belongs excludes them from the Christian communion—from the fold of Christ. Where is the act of that church that gives *him* a right to so speak? And what has been done by the Protestant Episcopal Church in America, that authorizes one of its ministers, while American men and women, with good will towards all, are enjoying their right of conscience, guarantied by the CONSTITUTION, in worshiping Almighty God according to that conscience, to assail them by an exclamation, "*They are much offended if* WE *will not denominate them a church—a church of Christ*"? The bigotry and domination implied (once a power, indeed, in Virginia, of which this region was a part) were, long ago, scorned from the land with the rule of the British king.

H. P.

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